

Gc  
974.102  
P837jo





Green

Portland - Aug. 21, 1939

ALLEN COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY



3 1833 02814 1783

Gc 974.102 P837jo  
Jones, Herbert G.  
Old Portland town

Herbert G. Jones, 1938

✓



## OLD PORTLAND TOWN

ALSO BY HERBERT G. JONES  
I DISCOVER MAINE

OLD  
PORTLAND  
TOWN

Herbert G. Jones

*Sketches by the Author*



*Portland, Maine*

THE MACHIGONNE PRESS

1938

COPYRIGHT 1938 BY HERBERT G. JONES

Allen County Public Library  
900 Webster Street  
PO Box 2270  
Fort Wayne, IN 46801-2270

LAUGHLIN ★ PORTLAND



---

## Contents

---

O HAPPY PORTLANDERS! . . . . .	3
BAD MEN AND G MEN IN 1818 . . . . .	15
OLD STAGE COACH AND TAVERN DAYS . . . . .	25
OLD PORTLAND MEDICOS . . . . .	35
WHEN DICKENS CAME TO PORTLAND . . . . .	43
A FAMOUS PORTLAND PRIVATEER . . . . .	49
THE JOYS OF PORTLAND WEATHER . . . . .	55
AN HISTORIC BED QUILT . . . . .	63
OLD GRAND TRUNK DEPOT AND FORT LOYALL . . . . .	69
A VISIT TO GRANDPA'S FARM . . . . .	77
THE CAPTURE OF THE CALEB CUSHING . . . . .	85
PREBLE: FATHER OF THE AMERICAN NAVY . . . . .	95
DARK DAYS OF '61 . . . . .	103
SHIPDAYS AND SHIPWAYS . . . . .	III



---

## Foreword

---

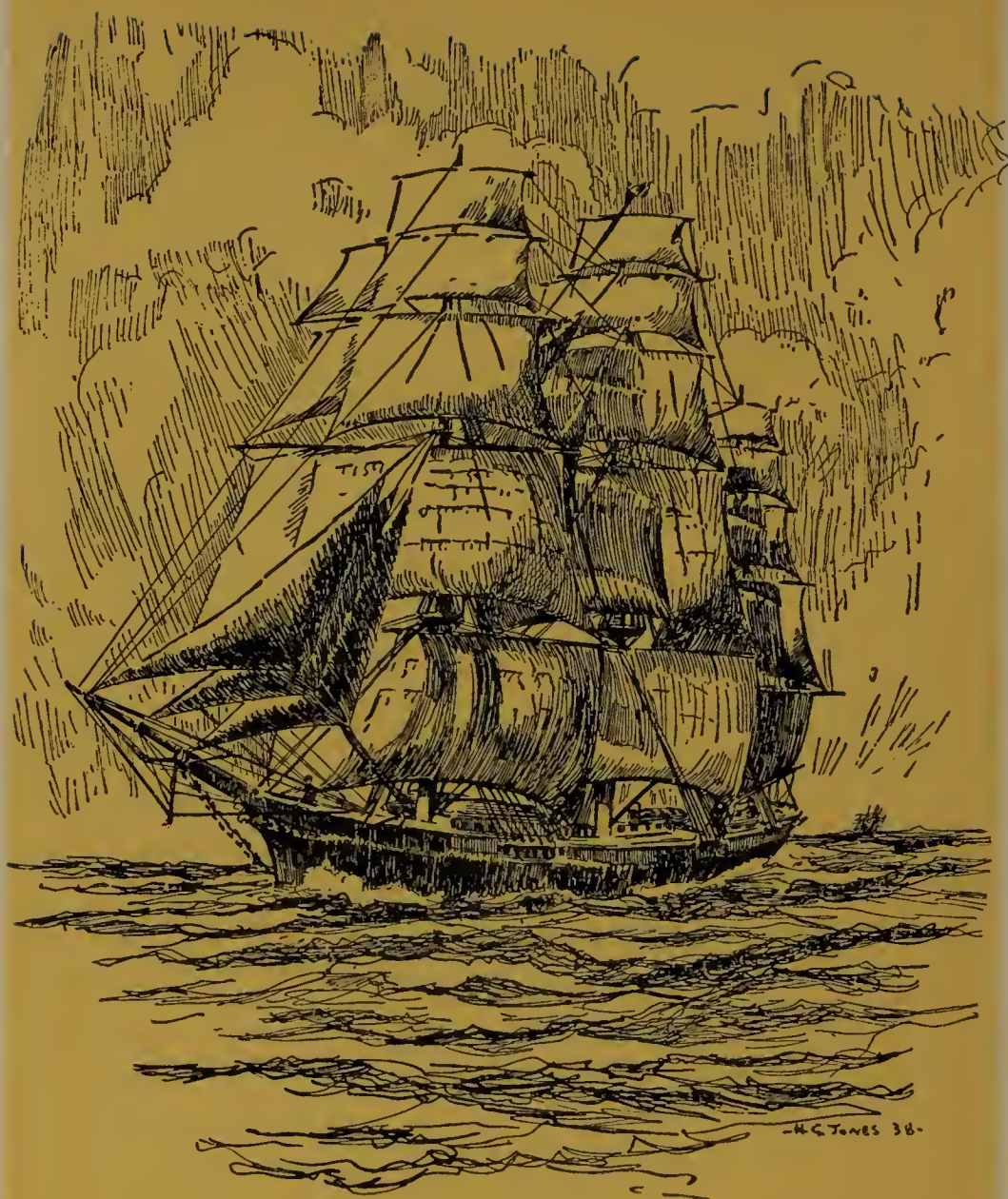
I WOULD be remiss indeed if I omitted to express my heartfelt and grateful appreciation of the very kind reception afforded my first book, "I Discover Maine." Its' contents — as in this present book — were written primarily for radio broadcasting with no original thought of publication. However I received so many requests for copies of the talks that I happily decided to put them in permanent form. While these stories have an historical base or foundation, I hasten to assure my readers that I am not, in any sense of the word, an historian — emphatically not. Far abler pens than mine have adequately covered this all important phase of our state. Nevertheless the hearty response that my broadcasts and writings have elicited from lovers of Maine and its history, both young and old, has thoroughly convinced me that my endeavors, slight though they may be, have created a stimulating interest in the backgrounds of our good old state, and that I have not labored in vain. Such labors are to me an infinite source of pleasure, and in the giving of pleasure to others — I am doubly happy.

Again I wish to pay tribute to the invaluable, and always courteous cooperation given me by the Librarians both at the Portland Public Library and the Historical Society, and to Mr. Ernest Small for the kind use of scrapbooks and rare prints.





O HAPPY PORTLANDERS!



*An American Clipper Ship*

*Those splendid ships, each with her grace, her glory,  
In memory of old song or comrades' story,  
They mark our passage as a race of men —  
Earth will not see such ships as these again.*

MASEFIELD

---

## O Happy Portlanders!

---

A WISE old philosopher once made this captivating remark: that the most interesting thing in the world to a dog, is another dog! Quite naturally then, we assume that the most interesting thing in the world to a human being, is another human being. On that premise, certainly the most exciting thing of interest to ourselves — is something about ourselves. So — let's talk about ourselves; enlivened a little perhaps by what the out-of-Stater thinks about ourselves.

But here's the rub. The average outsider or visitor to our city is usually so entranced with the grandeur of its scenery that he never, or hardly, has much to say about ourselves. Well, that's all right by us so to speak as every Portlander heartily subscribes to the doctrine "Love me, love my city." Nevertheless we are, I think, always intrigued with the thought of what outsiders really do think of us, so I turn with pleasure to the keen and kindly remarks made by Anthony Trollope, the great English novelist when he visited us back in 1861. "O Happy Portlanders!" he said, "if they only knew of their good fortune. They get up early and go to bed early."

Evidently he had an eye for our ladies, as he said they were very comely and sturdy, apparently well able to take care of themselves. Of our city, he said that it had an air of supreme plenty and the faces of its people told of three hearty meals a day and digestive powers in proportion. Now Trollope really had something there, don't you think? Curiously enough it so happens that he was not the only English novelist to notice



our “ happy powers of digestion.” Charles Dickens, who came here some years later, recalled the contented group of patrons lounging in the window chairs of the old Preble House in which he stayed. He observed, too, others standing out front in the shade of the magnificent elm trees leisurely picking their teeth with evident smug satisfaction. However I suspect that Dickens was slightly envious, as his own powers of digestion were notoriously abominable. At least this might be said on behalf of these ardent teeth-pickers, that they were patriotic citizens, for they were actively supporting a growing industry in South Paris which in the good old days, surprising as it may seem, made nothing but toothpicks, which ornamented every meal table both in hotels and at home.

And too, when a 17th century Englishman readily admits that there’s nothing to compare with the bracing, salubrious Maine climate when it comes to producing powers of digestion —well that’s front page news also. In his diary one James Rosier who accompanied the adventurous Captain George Weymouth when he sailed up the mouth of the Kennebec River in 1604, records “ that there is something about the Maine climate which makes it possible to eat and drink more heartily while there, without the feeling of inconvenience.” With such a God-given climate then is it any wonder that Maine has always enjoyed eating, particularly when we are told by Robert Tristram Coffin that the art of good eating really originated in Maine? The largest monument to good eating in all the world is to be found in Maine, in the Kennebec region, an enormous mound of oyster shells and bones, the debris of countless banquets consumed by prehistoric State o’ Mainers, surely evidence enough of happy powers of digestion.

The art of good eating might well be a priceless heritage handed down to us from our forefathers, whose mode of living according to John Jocelyn who visited Black Point, now



Scarboro, in 1663, closely tallied with that of Shakespeare's day. "They have" he said "a pleasant custom of taking tobacco and sitting long at meals sometimes as many as four a day." All of which makes me think that that genial author, Christopher Morley, must have been familiar with Jocelyn's remarks when he organized his famous "three hours for lunch club" in New York some years ago, as a protest to the hurried eating of today.

Yes, it is a proverbial truth, that Maine folks know and love good food. And why not? Food has played a very vital part in the early development of her state, for Maine was actually discovered in the search for food. It was the abundance of fish off our coasts that ultimately led the white man to our shores, long before the advent of the Pilgrim Fathers.

And how loyal we are to our own cooking and to our own foods, especially sea-foods! Let an out-of-State guest arrive, and invariably the cry arises, "Let's have a shore dinner." Like the spaghetti of sunny Italy, and the roast beef of old England, the shore dinner and its sister dish the fish chowder are truly traditional of Maine, and it might be added, quite impossible to resist. At least, according to legend, the adventurous confederate crew of the *Tacony* and her dashing commander, Lieutenant Read who entered Portland Harbor and stole our cutter the *Caleb Cushing* under the very shadow of the guns of Fort Preble, couldn't resist sitting down to a dish of Maine fish chowder while the more important business of war waited. And where could we find a happier appreciation of a Maine fish chowder than in the following bit of verse by our own poet, N. P. Willis:

O chowder, monarch of the stews —  
With onion tinctured — I am fain,  
By aid of my enraptured muse,

To sound thy virtues in a strain:  
The nation's glory. Greatest dish  
By art conceived and born of fish!

Everyone knows, or should know, that the most luscious lobsters in the world come from our own snug harbors, and the tenderest of ducks from Merrymeeting Bay, even though it took perhaps a world-famous chef like Louis Sherry to serve them at their best. But we can take satisfaction in the knowledge that even he learnt his art of cuisine in Yankeeland, for he was actually born in Vermont despite the fact that all his patrons thought him French. We must confess, I think, that thanks to our "happy powers of digestion" we are secretly partial at times to the custom of second helpings, or even a third, if the dish should prove particularly delectable, which of course is not to admit that we are gourmands in any sense of the term. Such for example as was Diamond Jim Brady. It was no unusual thing for Jim to order eight or ten covers for expected guests. If they all appeared Brady was delighted, and if nobody turned up, he was equally pleased, for he would then calmly proceed to finish the ten dinners himself!

What an enthusiastic State o' Mainer old Lucullus, the famous Roman general, would have made! He was born some years B.C., but he so loved sea-food that he had it brought all the way from the ocean to his family fish-pond built in his palace. There he stationed a slave whose sole duties were to see that the fish got the proper attention. The latter carried a huge salt-cellar from which he fed the fish a pinch of salt, every hour — on the hour. But as is the case with most salt-cellars it wouldn't work in rainy weather, so Lucullus solved the problem by digging a canal through the heart of the mountains to the sea. Thus the waters of the Mediterranean flowed freely to his family fish-pond.



How quickly a native Maineite is to detect an outsider, if only from the very inexperienced manner in which he attempts the difficult art of handling steamed clams piping hot from the shell. I vividly recall, and with great pleasure, my first introduction to a real clambake done in true Indian style while on a visit to Portland some twenty-five years ago. I was fortunate enough to be a guest of the Portland Club, and amidst a group of usually dignified local businessmen, then, however, more like a bunch of happy schoolboys, I was driven to the heart of a picturesque pine grove near Scarborough. By an odd circumstance I happened to be seated directly opposite Cyrus K. Curtis who was not only the proprietor of the *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, but incidentally my boss. Which of us was the most surprised at the meeting is hard to say, he, to see one of his help footloose in his native town, or myself, to find the "big Chief" amid such unexpected and democratic surroundings. But just to see him dig wholeheartedly into the lobsters and corn with both fists was a joy to behold. Notwithstanding that he had a million dollar yacht awaiting his pleasure anchored in the harbor, he seemed, at least to me, far happier and more at home out with the "boys," like the true son of Maine that he was.

Call it crabbed old age or what you will I truly can't help thinking that flaming youth of today in their modern speed wagons can never quite experience the thrill that I got out of my first leisurely train trip to Portland. First impressions, they say, are always the best. True, and with this added qualification, that with me, the first impression grows with the years and lingers indefinitely. My first reactions however were quite different to what I expected, and happily so. Certainly my knowledge of Maine prior to my visit, as was the case with most people at that time, was exceedingly vague. You see, it

was long before the era of smooth concrete roads and cheap automobiles and the “furriner,” generally speaking, had not discovered the State.

I was familiar of course with the names of Bar Harbor and York Harbor, because many of the Philadelphia “blue-bloods” had summer places there, and the *Ledger* featured their activities during the season. In the first part of the summer we would watch their exodus, dressed in grotesque costumes, the long dust-proof cloaks and fearsome eye-goggles, considered quite the style when perched in the high chariots of early motor-car days. But common folk couldn’t afford cars nor the expensive train fares, and few travelled long distances unless compelled to.

I know I visualized Maine as a sort of “no man’s land,” situated in the Arctic zone, inhabited by such quaint figures as graced the writings of Kate Douglas Wiggin and Artemus Ward. Doubtless they would be of solemn somber mien, puritanically garbed, and would spend the entire Sabbath either attending Dorcas societies, or in Peabody pews. Needless to say I was very agreeably mistaken.

Nevertheless to an outsider, Maine is definitely and refreshingly different. The very train one leaves on — one’s first introduction to Maine — comes as a perplexing surprise: The *State of Maine Express*. Instantly comes the thought, why the “State of Maine”? Whenever used in quite the same manner the phrase, the State of Pennsylvania, or the State of New Jersey. Now I realize that the term is a historic hangover from the days when Maine was a Province, a District, a State by itself entirely apart and distinctive from its neighboring states. It still is!

And at this point, perhaps some of my listeners will come to my rescue and help me unravel a mystery which I have never been able to solve. On the night of that memorable first



trip, I distinctly recall while peering from the railroad carriage into the gloom of the night, a certain name which I have never seen since. Nor strangely enough have I yet been able to find anyone else who can identify for me, the exact location. On the side of a building some few miles past the borderline of New Hampshire, which in the darkness I took to be a railroad station, was the name AGAMENTICUS. In my expectant frame of mind, and at the time entirely ignorant of Indian names, it struck me as being intensely and appropriately biblical, and then I knew that, at long last, I had arrived at the Promised Land!

There was a decided charm and delight in the train-travel days of old North Station when it was not nearly so ornate as it is now. It possessed a definite atmosphere, a distinct personality which seems quite lacking in its modernity of today. Quite different in appeal somehow to old South Station, which struck me as being rather an offshoot of New York, crowded as it was with restless activity. In pleasant contrast the old "North" however, had a homey flavor. It was always an agreeable meeting place for the folks from Maine. On its well-worn platforms one would be sure to recognize groups of naturally red-cheeked, voluble college girls on week-end vacations, or returning to school; both lean and portly drummers, — a race alas! well-nigh extinct, excitedly clambering aboard the "five hour smoker to Portland" for games of pitch; and perhaps a colorful glimpse of a woodsman's hunting jacket. And always, the ubiquitous, sturdy, vigorous, young-old ladies in lavender and lace, travelling alone and liking it, with the inevitable Boston Bag. They surely carried their years lightly and gracefully, and seemed entirely at home away from home, these rugged emissaries of a rugged state.

Pitkin must have been quite ignorant of Maine life or he would certainly have discovered that life began for these ladies

not at forty, but rather sixty, and even seventy. Their genial presence lent much to a scene of leisured charm, the like of which we will not see again.

Surprising as it may seem to skeptical stay-at-homes Portland invariably creates a striking and lasting impression on most travelled men of the world. As early as 1790 a French noble, the Duc de Rouchefauld, was very favorably impressed with our hospitality. He found the inns greatly to his liking, decent and very comfortable.

Our friend Trollope, too, must have been quite enraptured with the Portland of 1861 when he declared that he couldn't remember seeing a town with more evident signs of prosperity. "It has every mark of ample means," he said, "and no mark of poverty." Apparently there was some room for improvement, however, for he added, "It might be well if they could make their streets of some material harder than sand."

It must seem passing strange to the tremulous youth of to-day, softened, almost encumbered as he is by countless gadgets of modern luxury, that Trollope could be so in love with a place, which by comparison with our metropolis of these times, was hardly more than a hamlet. Its population of 23,000 got along quite comfortably, and seemed to thrive even on the inconvenience of oil lamps; depending in many instances on wells and cisterns for their drinking water; and — horrible thought! forced to do their journeying by shank's pony as horsecars had not then come into use. But he may rest assured, that Trollope looked upon a place, of all places on this habitable earth, that could, and did appreciate, the keenest sense of what is good in life, a place of culture and refinement in the best New England tradition. Let it be remembered too that Trollope looked upon a harbor that was literally white with shipping, with its twenty-six odd wharves loaded high with outgoing and incoming products. As for the town itself,



he could hardly have glimpsed a fairer scene, as yet unscarred by the holocaust of the fire of 1866, rich with luxuriant trees with their half-arched greenery shadowing underlying aristocratic mansions set in smooth velvety lawns.

The picture, even in 1896, was still enchanting and was likened by George Steevens, a world-famous globe-trotter, to a "lovely canto from the *Evangeline* of Longfellow." In the memory of one visitor during the fateful year of 1914, Portland reflected a marked atmosphere of culture, and the good things of life. It was not dependent then, as now, upon Boston or New York, for its theatrical enjoyment. The very cream of the profession regularly trod the stage of the old Jefferson, and it was still possible to comfortably fill city hall with lecture and concert attractions. It was a time too when Portland folks could derive great pleasure in their quiet simplicity even from lowly trolley rides to the now forgotten Riverton Park Casino and Cape Cottage, or pilgrimages to the islands, or just meditative walks alone with nature.

How often have we heard Portland referred to as being placid, cautious, prudent, and ultra-conservative! Admittedly prudent and perhaps to a degree placid or calm. Cautious? certainly; for life has not been altogether smooth for her. Thrice she has been pretty nearly destroyed. Once in a French-Indian raid; once in a bombardment by an irate British sea captain; and once by fire. She has gloriously survived all these adversities, but it has made her cautious, and perhaps sanely conservative. But not the brand of conservatism exemplified in the caustic remarks made by an European visitor some years ago. In reply to the statement of a local lady that Portland rather prided itself on being very conservative came the rather surprising answer, "Ah, but in my country conservatism is another term for stupidity."

Surely there is little indeed of stagnant conservatism about

an enterprising people, who unhesitatingly raised a million dollars to create a new railroad back in the 40's; who subscribed many thousands of dollars to erect the then largest wharf on the Atlantic coast for the encouragement of ocean steamship travel at a time when that mode of travel was in its infancy, and who in 1866 lay prostrate amid the smoking ruins of one of the greatest catastrophes this country had ever experienced, yet arose like the Phoenix almost overnight to a new and larger city.

Perhaps the hardy vigor of this conservatism which characterizes the people of Portland is due to the fibre inbred from centuries past, from a time when their forefathers were compelled to snatch a hard and meagre living from rocky farms and stormy wintry seas and forests primeval. As a result men and women were born who were naturally resourceful and vigorous and when they migrated to new lands as many did, they helped to conquer and create a new vast empire for the nation, and left their indelible impress on every part of this continent. They were moulders of a new republic in a distinctly Maine, way which is the American way.

Ethnically speaking, Maine people are chiefly native born of native sons with less tendency, perhaps, toward intermingling with other races than in any other section of the country. A glance at the genealogical register will show generation after generation of pure unmixed names, often under the same family roof tree, rare indeed, in this now restless and changing country. Truly then Maine is the last stronghold of the American race and all over these United States you will find sons and daughters, descendants of pioneers from this State whose wanderlust has never made them entirely forget the home of their ancestors. Wherever they may roam, if fortunate enough, they ultimately succumb to the relentless urge, and find their way back to their beloved State.



After all, perhaps, to thoroughly appreciate one's birthland one should leave and come back, as the returning is a never failing delight. The day may come, it is said, when all peoples, nations, and languages, will be absorbed in one amorphous world state; but until that day, and may it be far off, let us hold firmly on to our own Maine ideals: love of liberty, love of idealism, and last, but certainly not least, love for the good old State of Maine.



---

## Bad Men and G Men in 1818

---

IT is the morning of August 3, 1818, the beginning of another warm summer's day, and the little business section of Portland is actively taking down the shutters of its shops, when out on the early morning air comes a strange, harsh, unfamiliar voice—

*Calling all hoss teams, ox teams, and postriders!*  
*Calling all hoss teams, ox teams, and postriders!*

“High-handed robbery. \$1000 reward. The Cumberland Bank was on last Saturday night entered and robbed of over two hundred thousand dollars in bills, gold, and silver. All good citizens are earnestly called upon not to receive any such bills because having been stolen they will not be paid at the Bank.”

*Calling all hoss teams, ox teams, and postriders!*  
*Calling all—*

That, of course, would be the modern way of announcing to the citizens that an amazing robbery had just taken place to the tune of more than two hundred thousand dollars. Now the loss of an amount like that would be regarded as quite a tidy sum in our city today, but think what it must have been to the little township that was Portland, in a generation which knew nothing of steamboats, railroads, telephone or telegraph, without even an organized police force. Nevertheless, we had Enemy Number One and a G-man even in those far off days, as you shall see.

A hundred and twenty years ago the little hamlet of Portland could boast of a population of only about three thousand with about five hundred homesteads, but it more than made up for its lack of size in bustling business activity. The people themselves, although under the stern oppression of Massachusetts authorities, as Maine was not yet a separate state, were essentially a happy and pleasure-loving people, quite in contrast to their dour, hatchet-faced Puritan rulers. The rape of little Austria by Hitler which has just shocked the whole world was no more tragic than the rape of the little Maine Colony in the seventeenth century by the grasping Puritans, the true story of which has never been fully told in history.

The only crime of these early Maine settlers, if such be a crime, was a keen zest for the joy of life, a heritage handed down from their forefathers, who came mostly from the west coast of England, and who brought with them a little Merrie England of the days of the good Queen Elizabeth. In fact, along the whole coast from Portsmouth to Portland, these early colonists lived a life that might have stepped directly from the pages of Shakespeare's Falstaff and his merry crew.

Popular everywhere was Thomas Morton, a "gent" from London who with his Merrymount company added greatly to the gaiety of life. They danced their famous Maypole frolic in which even the Indian lassies in beaver coats took part. They made merry too, with music, drank plenty of sack, fox-hunted, chased wolves with dogs, indulged in all kinds of games, and loved good beer and apple pie. Their very folk speech was often flavored with typical Shakespearean epithets such as "cod-piece," "punk," "horse-headed," "pedlar's trull."

It is an interesting truth that the early life of Maine has a curious correlation with Shakespeare, since its first colonization in 1607 came as a result of a voyage of discovery sponsored by the Earl of Southampton, who was the patron of Shakespeare,



and to whom the latter dedicated his early poems. I like to think of Shakespeare himself as an unwitting discoverer of Maine for he makes mention of Indians in his play, *The Tempest*. These were evidently the same Indians captured by Captain Weymouth when he landed near Port Clyde in 1605. The Captain took them back in his ship to England and exhibited them in London and the provinces as "strange savages."

Now all this gay life in the province to the north of them greatly disturbed the minds of the dolorous, narrow Puritans of Massachusetts. Secretly coveting the good business profits the Maine people made out of lumber, fish, and shipping, they took advantage of every lame excuse to interfere, until by actual force they stepped in and grabbed the whole southern part of the State. But at the time of our story, the year 1818, there was already considerable agitation to throw off the hated yoke, a clamor for a separate state, which actually came two years later.

On the morning of the robbery, groups of citizens were excitedly discussing a startling story told by a fisherman, how he had seen a huge sea serpent disporting itself off Crotch Island a day or two before. The monster was at least eighty feet long, with a head like a common snake, but with a neck as large as the trunk of a good sized tree. They were talking, too, about the real live elephant that had recently been exhibited in Portland, probably the first elephant ever to be brought to America. Unfortunately, while the beast was being shown at Sanford an enraged farmer took personal exception to the amount of money wasted, as he thought, upon such an exhibit, and shot the animal.

And now came the astounding news that when Joseph Swift, the cashier of the Cumberland Bank, had opened his brick, oven-like vault that morning, he had found everything gone, absolutely cleaned out, with the exception of a little loose



change, mere chicken-feed, so to speak. The story spread like wildfire throughout the little township, and everyone was in a state of feverish excitement. "Who could have done it?" was on every tongue.

Well, the robbers could hardly get away as Portland was then, as it is today, an island, with the exception of one small peninsular strip, the Stroudwater road. The little township was fenced in too, or more properly, shut out from the rest of the world by toll bridges. A man could not come into the town to sell a bushel of potatoes, or a peck of beans, without payment to the hated toll-keeper, for the privilege of doing business. And quite a serious problem for the young folks was that the "sport" could not take his girl out in the country without paying twenty-five cents both ways, so you see courting was an expensive custom in those times.

And the police of those days? Well, Portland's first police force, or watch as it was then styled, didn't come into existence until 1798. At a town meeting the selectmen decided to appoint eight watchmen to be employed nightly from ten o'clock to daylight, "whose duty it shall be to patrol the streets of the town, and alarm the inhabitants in case of fire, or on the approach of any other calamity, and that the said watchers shall give a bond for the faithful discharge of their duties." The pay, which was very small, was left to the discretion of the selectmen. The first watch was headed by an inspector named George Warren, who received the magnificent sum of twenty dollars a year, and was allowed to wear an ornate badge of authority. They were required to carry long hooked sticks very much on the order of the hook, so popular on amateur nights.

Evidently the job was none too popular, as the selectmen had to resort at times to the drafting of citizens from the voting lists to keep the staff complete. It was a pretty tough job too,

in a time when there were no telephones or signal boxes. If a particular cop had a difficult assignment somewhere on the outskirts, and was set upon by a gang of toughs, as was so often the case, he had to depend upon his wits and physical strength to get out of the mess alive. This old style police watch passed out of existence in 1849, when a city force of twenty policemen was organized. The famous or infamous Black Maria came into the picture in 1887, a hearse-like box affair drawn by two horses, and its iron-tired wheels clattering over the cobblestone streets worked havoc on the nerves of the citizens.

The early jails were veritable "Black holes of Calcutta." Neither beds nor blankets were provided, and the inmates had to sleep on bare plank boards with the heads of spikes sticking out an inch high. Men and women were herded together, and more often than not a part of the jail building was used to store gunpowder and amunition, a situation which could not have been too comforting to the nerves of the prisoners.

The inspector of the watch at the time of the robbery was old Seth Bird, the G-man of his day. He was a pretty shrewd fellow, and he went to work efficiently and quietly, somewhat in contrast to all the present-day fanfare and publicity of Hoover and his crew. A careful examination of the lock of the bank vault showed no sign of tampering, and it was evident no force had been used to open it. But not a trace of evidence, nor could any clue be found. What an ideal setting for our amateur sleuths of present day fiction, say a Van Dine or a Perry Mason!

In the meantime, any person who had Cumberland Bank bills in his possession was regarded with some suspicion, and the unfortunate possessor of a quantity of them had to prove a pretty stout alibi to old Seth Bird. The inspector quickly came to the conclusion that the vault door must have been opened with a false key. Further inquiries from the bank offi-



cials showed that some time previously the lock had been repaired at Ellis' blacksmith shop.

Now enter the villains in the case, a George Manley who kept a junk shop on Long Wharf, and a confederate named Rolfe who had rather a shady reputation. After some questioning, the blacksmith remembered seeing Manley curiously examining the lock while it was lying around waiting to be repaired. How simple and trusting life must have been in those days when a bank president would leave the lock of his vault at the mercy of all sightseers, without a strain on his conscience!

Old Seth was hot on the trail now. He discovered that Manley had obtained some moulding sand at John Noble's foundry, and, as he surmised, with the help of Rolfe made an impression and a false key. The finding of a canvas specie bag in the yard of Manley's junk shop further confirmed his suspicions. But he wanted to find the money as well as convict the suspected robbers, so he gave Rolfe what was probably Maine's first third degree examination, promising him that if he would turn state's evidence and disclose the hiding place of the booty, he would go free. To save his own skin, Rolfe agreed, and that night led the inspector with his men to a spot near the water's edge, not far from where the plant of the Portland Company now stands.

The scene must have been tense with excitement, as in the quiet of the night by the light of crude tallow candles, they began to dig at the place indicated by Rolfe. But the money had gone—disappeared! Manley, his partner in crime, had suspected that matters between his accomplice and himself were not right, and had secretly removed the treasure to another hiding place. Rolfe was completely staggered by the unexpected turn of events, and realizing the plight he was in, suddenly drew a pistol and blew out his brains, his body tumbling into the very treasure hole he had helped to dig.



The inspector, non-plussed for a moment by the unexpected tragedy, hastily cautioned his men to say nothing about the suicide of Rolfe. He rushed to find Manley telling him only that his confederate had confessed everything, implicating him in the crime, and that if he would come clean about the whole matter, and help them to recover the money, he would actually receive the full award offered by the bank. So another night treasure hunt was organized, this time in a field near the marshes of Scarboro, and the strange drama of criminal and police feverishly digging for buried gold was again reenacted. And again the money had disappeared, vanished apparently into thin air.

Now this was just too much for old Seth — twice he had been given the run-around. Undoubtedly it would have gone hard for Manley if they hadn't just then been hailed by voices out of the darkness, telling them that the money had really been found. A day or so before, a Scarboro clamdigger and his son had noticed a strange man in the field, and after investigating the matter found some newly upturned earth. Their curiosity aroused and knowing of the robbery they began to dig and uncovered several bags of gold coins.

Eventually, the bank recovered the whole amount with the exception of a small bag of gold, and Manley was sent to Charleston prison for a term of twelve years. However, he was allowed to share the reward with the clam diggers and after serving his time returned to Portland and engaged in business, presumably with the money he had received. To all appearances he remained a law-abiding citizen, and now lies buried in the old Eastern Cemetary.

From then on we may be sure the bank officials took far greater precautions with their clients' funds, some for a while taking all money to their own homes for greater security. One bank president ingeniously devised a key that contained tumb-

lers inside, and it was so made that it could be divided in halves, he taking home one part each night, and the cashier the other.

Old Seth Bird, Inspector of the Portland night watch of the year 1818, may not have been a modern Young King Brady who to quote Westbrook Pegler, "could solve a crime by smearing magic chemicals on an echo," but he certainly got his man!

OLD STAGE COACH AND TAVERN DAYS





*The old Elm Tavern which stood on the corner of  
Federal and Temple Streets*

---

## Old Stage Coach and Tavern Days

---

AT the special request of one of my listeners, I am going to tell something of the romantic era of Old Stage Coach and Tavern Days here in Maine. For some unaccountable reason, the few books that have been written on this fascinating and glamorous subject seem to have quite ignored the coach and tavern days in our own state, yet that period was just as interesting and sometimes more historic than any other State in the Union. The height of its greatest prosperity coincides exactly with the coaching days in England, but unfortunately we have no such chronicler as Charles Dickens, who, in the adventures of Pickwick, reflected the glory of the old-time coaches and inns more than any other writer. Curiously enough, Dickens got the title of Pickwick from an English tavern keeper named Moses Pickwick who was also a stage-coach driver.

As we glance at the map of Maine to-day, gridironed as it is with railroads and improved highways, retrospective imagination is required to visualize a country whose sole means of travel for many years was team-drawn wagons and lumbering coaches, all dependent upon the old taverns for entertainment and comfort. From rude shanty to the modern palatial hotel, and from the early post-rider to the swift express and automobile is a far cry indeed. It is hard to realize that the very first roads in our state were nothing more than the trodden paths of wild animals made through the natural openings between trees, and the soft impression of the moccasin of the Indian. Then the



trails became deepened and worn by the heavy shoes of the white settler, and it was not until 1653 that we could boast of a made road — the early Kennebunk road by the sea just sufficiently wide for horse and foot. Up to that time most of the inhabitants used boats when they could, or the beach fronts and Indian trails.

Although the adjacent towns of Saco and Biddeford were settled in 1630, there were no regular roads and no taverns and every household considered it a duty to put up travellers. But after the Kennebunk road became an accepted fact, the tavern came in and became a definite part of our social life, and grew with the development of the stagecoach era. The first tavern, or ordinary, as a public house was then termed, was licensed to a Richard Secomb who opened his place near India Street, and while historians seem to differ as to the exact date when the first stagecoach travel came into being, one of the earliest certainly must have been that of Joseph Barnard, an old post-rider who operated a crude two-horse wagon between Portland and Portsmouth in 1787. The fare was 20 shillings and his curious advertisement reads: "Those ladies and gentlemen who choose the expeditious, cheap, and commodious way of stage travelling, will please leave their names at Motley's Tavern."

The success of the Portsmouth and Portland stage experiment started other routes and did much to add to the development of the roads. In 1793, we find a Caleb Graffam running a two-horse wagon affair as far as Hallowell. It usually left Portland on Monday morning, reached Wiscasset on Tuesday, and its destination the next day. Hallowell in the early days, dreamed of being the greatest port in Maine, even eclipsing Portland, then the capital of the state, because of its advantageous situation on the Kennebec River. The Portland to Augusta stage started some 12 or 13 years later, and about the same time an enterprising citizen began driving a four-horse,



home-made carriage between here and Waterford, going through Bridgton.

By this time they were running a fairly even schedule between this city and Boston, the fare one way being eight dollars.

But, for thrilling adventure it would be hard to beat the famous so-called Flying Stage which began to run, Lord knows how — considering the condition of the roads in those days, — between New York and Bangor back in the early 1800's. They always arrived at their stopping places late at night, and the passengers were called again at three in the morning. Then after a hurried breakfast they would be loaded on the coaches by lantern light and jolted over the roads to their destination. At times, the going would be so bad that the driver would call out to the passengers to lean out of the coach, first on one side and then on the other, to prevent the vehicle from overturning in the deep ruts. And, often, the harassed travellers were compelled to push the coach through the thick mire and walk long distances to relieve the horses. Even a hardened sea captain from Wiscasset compared the Flying Stage with "a ship rocking and beating against the heavy seas, straining all her timbers with a low moaning sound as she drives over the contending waves." A good day's journey under favorable conditions in the summertime was about forty miles; in the winter from twenty to twenty-five miles; and the occupants of the coach stifled with the heat, or nearly froze to death, according to the season.

A gala occasion was the much heralded opening of the mountain stages by John Smith in 1833. He ran the Oxford House in Fryeburg, and his attractive niece presided over the bar with charming grace and much success. The golden period of the stagecoach reached its height in the years 1840 to 1845, and Portland was the principal center of all the stage

lines and express teams which were routed in all directions. The old Elm House which stood on the corner of Federal and Temple Streets was the most stylish hotel of that time and was the headquarters of the stages. They had traffic difficulties even in those days, as at times it was almost impossible to pass through Federal Street on account of the blockade of coaches drawn up two and three deep, morning and night. The inn got its name from a splendid elm tree which stood in front, and to the tree was attached a heavy chain and staple, to which the leading coach horses were hitched while waiting for the word to go. The tree died a lingering death after being struck by lightning.

A great variety of vehicles was used in transporting mail and passengers but the most imposing of all was the Concord coach drawn by six and sometimes eight horses. It was a wonderful affair with its decorations of gold and yellow, and in imagination it must have rivalled the modern circus chariot. Some coaches cost as much as \$3,000, no small sum for those times, and they even had their own stagecoach paper called *The Boston Traveller*.

The stagedriver himself was quite a unique institution. He usually wore new store clothes in an age when people were wearing homespun, and in winter he arrayed himself in a fancy tailored overcoat, gloves, and sometimes an outside frock gathered in at the waist with a gorgeous colored sash. He was a noted man because he was a traveller when most folks stayed at home. He saw and heard things unknown to the rural inhabitants, and as he was always a good story teller, he was welcomed at firesides in the bar-rooms. If he stretched a point in his wildest imagination, his listeners, who knew little of the outside world, could hardly dispute him. He had the unquestioned right of way on the highway and the coming and going of his coach was the most exciting event in the life



of the townspeople. No matter how tamely, perhaps, the horses plodded along between stops, the drivers had trained their teams to a nicety, in the art of getting smartly away, or arriving at the tavern door with a great dash and spirit. The sound of the coachman's horn became familiar throughout the countryside, not only to serve notice of the rapid approach of the coach, but also the number of toots would indicate to the landlord how many passengers planned to stay at the inn.

Some of my radio listeners will probably remember old Stephen Higgins who died in 1902, at the age of ninety-eight. In his youth he carried the mail to Boston on horseback, and later became a noted stagedriver. I believe he was the last of his race, the last link of an age of romance. Some other well-known drivers were Tom Sands, Lewis Hill, who drove the Kennebec stage, William Littlefield and Isaac Kilborn, who drove between York and Portland in 1843.

Only this morning I spent a delightful hour with one of my kind lady listeners, whose keen mind goes back to the coaching days in Kennebunk where she was born. And of all Maine towns, surely, there is no more charming place — parts of it still quite unspoiled by the mad tempo of modern civilization — with its age-old elms and stately graceful residences of long distant past. This lady recalls seeing many a gay honeymoon couple whirled away on their life's journey by way of the old yellow coach to Boston.

A great event in the lives of the youth of old Kennebunk village, in which the old stagecoach played a very important and profitable part, were the annual camp meetings that used to congregate between that town and Biddeford. They lasted for one week and used to attract crowds of farmers and their families for miles around. Most of the congregation slept in tents in the fields and it looked like a miniature army encampment.



The village stage driver, Charles Hall, was kept pretty busy those days and it was the great delight of the young belles to clamber on top of the coach to watch the Civil War troops pass through the railroad station, which was then some three miles from the village. One of the most famous hotels in this part of the country stood in this village up to a year or so ago. It was the Mousam House, opened in 1777, the stopping place for all coaches, and it was here that both President Monroe and Lafayette put up when they visited this state. Stage days were lively days in old Kennebunk for the town was just the halfway stop between Portland and Portsmouth. In the early days the village did not have the best of roads, and frequently, the coach would be dependent upon the tide before it could cross the local stream.

Picturesque old taverns sprang up almost overnight along all the various stage routes and were the center of village life. They were the friendly meeting places of business men, doctors, lawyers and the fashionable people of the leisure class. They all sold spirits as a matter of course, the established price being about five cents a small glass, with a spoonful of molasses to sweeten the toddy. Punch and flip were the common drinks on all occasions, weddings and funerals alike, and there was always considerable mirth when the village parson had difficulty in mounting his horse after a funeral.

The year 1800 saw the innovation of turnpike roads, so named because at certain intervals along the way, long poles armed with sharp spikes were thrown across the road to stop traffic. Here the traveller had to pay a fee for use of the road. After payment of the toll the spiked poles were turned or raised and the driver and his conveyance would pass. At that time the favorite taverns seem to have been Broad's at Stroudwater, Milliken's at Scarboro, Littlefield's at Wells, the Emerson at York, and Lord's at Berwick. Certain tradi-

tional legends naturally grow around old landmarks and I only wish I had the time to tell you of such famous old hotels as Jed Prouty's at Bucksport which can boast the signatures of four presidents on its registers, the Burnham at Machias, the Staples House at Old Orchard, Cowan's at Lisbon, the old Alfred House in that town, and Favor's Tavern in Dover which used to be the halfway house between Bangor and Moosehead in a wolf-infested country.

Favorite yarns of early stagecoach travel tell how, when deep snow impeded the progress of the coach, packs of wolves would follow the wheel tracks and had to be driven off by the guns of the drivers. This was particularly true of the wild country stretches north of Bangor and travellers who were forced to travel between there and Presque Isle, especially in wintertime, soon found the glamour of the journey give way to a realization of the exposure and severe hardships involved in a three-day passage.

It is, I am sure, hard to imagine a more peaceful stretch of road than that which extends between Bangor and Crawford, on the old military road constructed by the government for the use of the troops in the bloodless war of Aroostook. Yet this very spot was the scene of a series of stagecoach robberies that rival the days of the "Jesse James" boys. Three brothers, it is said, living near Bangor became highwaymen and terrorized this neighborhood, stopping coaches several times a week. They were brought to justice in a curious way. A passenger who had been robbed while travelling north, happened to visit a Boston tavern several months later. He recognized one of the bandits lounging in the tap-room. The latter, accused, shouted his innocence, but a golden nugget, hanging from his watch-chain was found to bear the initials of the coach passenger.

A celebrated stage route was the one between Bangor and



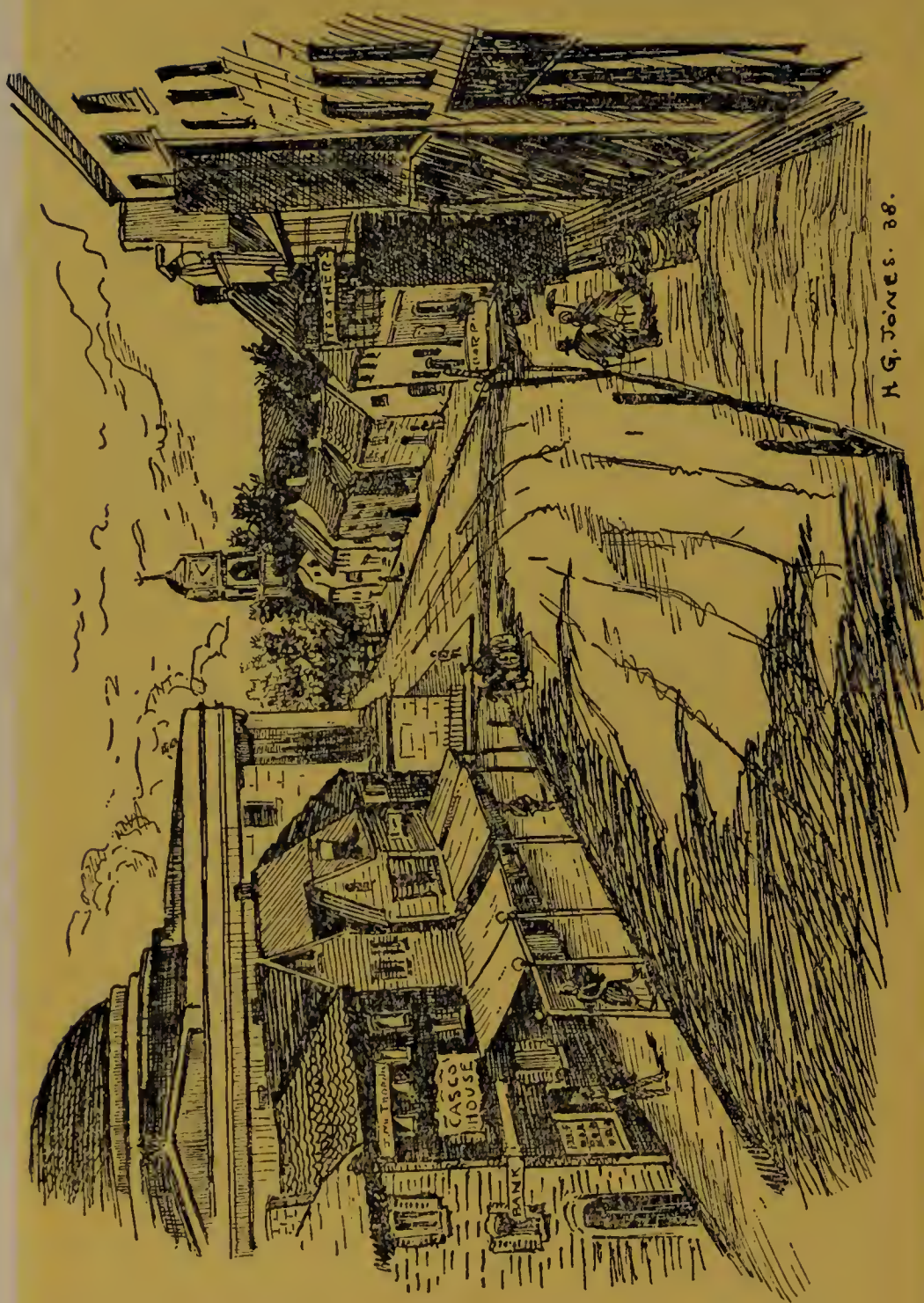
Moosehead through virgin wooded territory thronged with kaleidoscopic scenes of lumbering, lumberjacks and teamsters. The coach usually made good time considering the condition of the roads. It left Greenville at four a.m. and arrived in Bangor at seven o'clock in the evening of the same day, changing horses at East Corinth, Sangerville, Guilford, Monson, and other places.

It is worth remarking that the Mansion House at Poland Springs, when under the Ricker family, was the oldest stage coach tavern in the country, with an uninterrupted management since the days it opened in 1794. It had never closed its doors to a coming guest, day or night. We are accustomed to think of those far off days as hard, and rigorous and dour. Hard and rigorous they may have been, but never dour, for life must have been gay indeed, in the coaching and tavern days. What excitement and commotion must have been caused in the sleepy villages as the clear sound of the bugle horn of the driver heralded the approach of the stage coach. And what a romantic and busy scene when the galloping horses would clank into the tavern yard and the hostlers would rush to unharness and feed the steaming horses while the beaming landlord, bowing to the passengers, would invite them into the dining room to roast beef, chicken, fried ham and eggs, and hot toddies.

But these vistas of our romantic past have gone into the limbo of things forgotten, leaving but a faint memory for the harassed present generation. The coming of the railroads and steamboats soon sounded the death knell of long distance stage driving. Some of the drivers became operators on the railroads, others succumbed to the lowly trade of hack driving. The old stage routes were gradually abandoned and with them went many of the old taverns. A few still stand where they used to in days of yore. One old square shaped inn, so they



say, can still be seen a mile or so off the Lewiston road, which at one time served as a halfway house between Portland and that city. Now it is empty, dilapidated and forlorn, with little to suggest its former glories. It has the reputation of being haunted. Strange eerie noises are to be heard at certain hours of the night, faint but unmistakable echoes of a vanished splendor, muffled hoof beats, the tinkling of glasses as the ghost of its last landlord smiles upon his last guest, and casts the last log into the capacious fireplace. Ah! well, maybe it's true. Who knows?



*A view of Middle Street in 1844, showing the Exchange Building on the site of the old postoffice, also the Second Parish Meeting House, burned in the fire of 1866*



---

## Old Portland Medicos

---

I WONDER if you have noticed how quite “medical” we have become in our reading tastes of late. Topics that were taboo only yesterday, it seems, now greet us in bold headlines at our breakfast table, and are discussed by every member of the family as freely as the weather or last season’s hat.

As a matter of fact the most discussed and widely read novel of the past year is the *Citadel*, distinctly a medical book written around the theme of the struggles of a young surgeon, with its pages so profuse with medical terms and hospital atmosphere that one could easily imagine oneself reading a doctor’s thesis rather than a work of fiction. And, actually, the publishing presses can hardly satisfy the constant demand for sweet romances of handsome doctors and equally attractive nurses that are always guaranteed to produce a heart-skip in the pulse of most feminine readers.

Now, all this, I think, marks a very interesting and significant change in the attitude of the general public toward hospitals and the medical profession. Time was, and not so long ago, when people who could avoid it never went to a hospital, and certainly would not care to read about one. They were looked upon with intense dread. Today, however, everyone with almost any illness at all wishes to go there.

The science of healing certainly makes fascinating reading, for in no other act does man approach so near the gods as when he is restoring the sick to the blessings of health. No other



profession mingles so freely with all classes or is so broadly in touch with the pulse of humanity from its highest to its lowest. No other calling is so often appealed to for gratuitous service and no other responds freely or so often. In these enlightened times we are rather amazed and somewhat shocked to learn that there are still people in far off lands who are primitive enough to cling to ancient beliefs—that all sickness is due to some supernatural agency, inflicted as a punishment by offended gods of antiquity, and of the healing power of charms.

Well, I wager, that within the sound of my voice there are many of us who still remember the sulphur and molasses treatment of our youth, which in those days was considered quite a remedy for Spring fever, whatever that may be. Alas! Little is heard of that tonic today because the modern druggist has probably forgotten how to mix the dose, and those who sampled the brimstone and treacle of their youth remember only too well not to ask for it. Probably, it was just as beneficial as the horse chestnut, which men secreted in their pockets to ward off rheumatism, or the camphor bags which little girls and boys were made to wear suspended from their necks to prevent colds and contagious diseases.

Even up to the beginning of the 19th century, we were living in the comparative stage of the dark ages in regard to medical science, for a great deal of surgery was still being practised by barbers, and, in fact, by almost anyone who cared to take it up. The familiar blue and white striped pole was the barber-surgeon's trade mark, an emblem still retained by the barber of today. With few qualified dentists, if any, the village blacksmith was invariably called in to relieve his neighbors of toothache by rough extraction.

The greatest advances in medical science are strictly modern in that they have all been made within the past few years. Actually its complete story as we know it today, can be encom-

passed within the lifetime of one of our own Portland doctors, the oldest living physician in the state and certainly one of the oldest in the country. Dr. Dunn is ninety-four years old—did I say old? Not at all—ninety-four years young with all the mental activity, apparent good health and keenness of a man less than half his age. Incredible as it may seem in these days of quick tempo, he was born at a time when Lincoln was a struggling lawyer, and Japan entirely unknown to the Western world. He commenced practise at the close of the Civil War. He has told me of his most interesting early experiences, and with a chuckle of how his first patient happened to be a negro who paid him the high fee of a dollar for his services.

The greatest miracles of medical discovery, ether, the Lister method of antiseptic surgery, X-Rays, radium, the modern hospital, and perhaps the most important of all, the modern trained nurse have all been made within the span of this one doctor's life. Portland was a bit of a village at the time of his birth in 1844, with less than fifteen thousand population and only eighteen doctors.

The people of those days read their newspapers and the youngsters did their studying by the dim light of oil lamps, and depended on wells and cisterns for their water supply. There was only one railroad, which went to Boston, and all travel in any other direction had to be done either by stage coach or team. The residential section was mainly on Munjoy Hill and in the neighborhood of Lincoln Park, and the business offices on India, Fore and Exchange Streets. Congress Street at High was very much in the country, and if you didn't mind getting mired in the mud occasionally, you could visit the circusses and sideshows that pitched their stands in the locality between Brown and High. Good physicians were scarce in those days, in fact, the early doctors of Portland were in most cases clergymen who administered to the body as well as the soul.



Old Parson Smith of the First Parish church was for years the only physician in the Neck as old Portland was called. In later years when they became more plentiful, they usually ran their own drug stores, and made up in the cost of prescriptions what they couldn't collect in fees. By way of comparison, it is interesting to note that the standard fees were fifty cents for an office call, and seventy-five cents for a visit, but, if they had to board a vessel they usually added another seventy-five cents and still extra if they had to go upstream. The early druggist with his gilded mortar and colored show bottles often slept in his store to answer calls at all hours of the night, made his own pills, emulsions, ointments, and carried a line of medicines for cattle and horses. Like the doctors he often exchanged his wares and services for barter, shoes, firewood, salted meats, and farm produce.

An ancient ledger dated 1800 of Dr. Charles Hay, ancestor of the present Hay stores, who practised in Cape Elizabeth, shows that he kept accounts in shillings and pence. The prominent physicians in 1812 were Nathaniel Coffin, Samuel Weed, John Merrill, Stephen Cummings, and old Aaron Porter, a very eccentric character who until the end of his days dressed in knee breeches and buckle shoes. It is said that his stockings were so vividly green in color that the cows in Deering's pasture often mistook them for cornstalks. Outside the environs of Portland was comparatively a wilderness very scantily settled, and it was not unusual for a doctor to ride a hundred miles on horseback to make visits in the outlying districts. There were no good roads, and he had to make his way the best he could along mere threads of bridle paths, through bush and forest, often in drifting snow, and if travelling at night, to the accompaniment of the howl of wolves and yelping of foxes.

There were no hospitals in Maine until the Government Marine Hospital and the Maine General were established in



1859. On the site of the Marine Hospital once stood the famous Verandah Hotel where Longfellow put the finishing touches to his poem, *Evangeline*. The building of the Maine General was the result of the untiring efforts of a group of remarkable doctors of the fifties: William Warren Greene, Sam Tewksbury, Thomas Foster, John Gilman, Israel Dana, Charles O. Hunt, Augustus Thayer, and Frederick Henry Gerrish. Dr. Gerrish, by the way, was the first physician in Northern New England to introduce the Lister method of antiseptic surgery. It was not generally accepted at that time, and only two other doctors besides himself favored the method. It is hard in these days to appreciate the storm of disapproval and controversy this wonderful innovation created among the medical profession.

Some few years ago a New York dramatist produced a play which not only became tremendously popular, but was eventually awarded the Pulitzer prize. It was called, *Men in White*, and its most dramatic moment was a clinical scene in a hospital with the doctor and his entire staff dressed in white gowns, caps, and masks — hence the name, *Men in White*. Now contrast this with a famous painting that hangs in the Jefferson Medical college in Philadelphia, also a scene in a hospital in the year 1875. Dr. Gross, the most eminent physician of his day, and his staff of assistants are actually dressed in their ordinary street clothes. This was the custom until the ultimate adoption of the new Lister method which revolutionized the profession, and has saved more lives than Napoleon succeeded in destroying in all his campaigns of bloodshed.

It is an interesting medical fact that prior to 1900 little was known about appendicitis, now probably the most common and simple of all operations. But an attack of appendicitis once caused the postponement of a Royal coronation, and caused almost an obscure disease to become overnight the most fam-

ous and the most fashionable. Old Queen Victoria died in 1901, and her famous—some people called him infamous—son, the Prince of Wales, who was a much feted guest of this city in 1860, was to be crowned King Edward VII. The most gorgeous and spectacular pageant in the history of coronations had been planned, royal guests from all lands were on hand, and London was thronged as never before for the festivities. Two days before the actual coronation, the king was stricken with a mysterious disease. It was diagnosed by the royal surgeon, Sir Frederick Treves, as appendicitis, and the coronation was postponed. The operation was completely successful, and as is the custom in royal lands, kings and queens set the fashion whether it be a dress, a shade of color, or a disease, so hundreds of the nobility and subjects kept the surgeons busy for months afterwards.

The modern hospital traces its origin to the early inns or hotels established for the care of the aged and infirm. The familiar Dick Whittington of Bow Bells of London who thrice became Lord Mayor of London founded one of the earliest hospitals on record. From the Pennsylvania Hospital in Philadelphia, the first to be established in this country, to the modern institution of today is a far cry indeed. Indeed it is an example of one of the greatest of all advances in scientific and humanitarian development. Elizabeth Barrett Browning in one of the loveliest of her poems, says:

I think it frets the saints in heaven to see  
How many desolate creatures on the earth,  
Have learnt the simple dues of fellowship,  
And social comfort in a hospital.

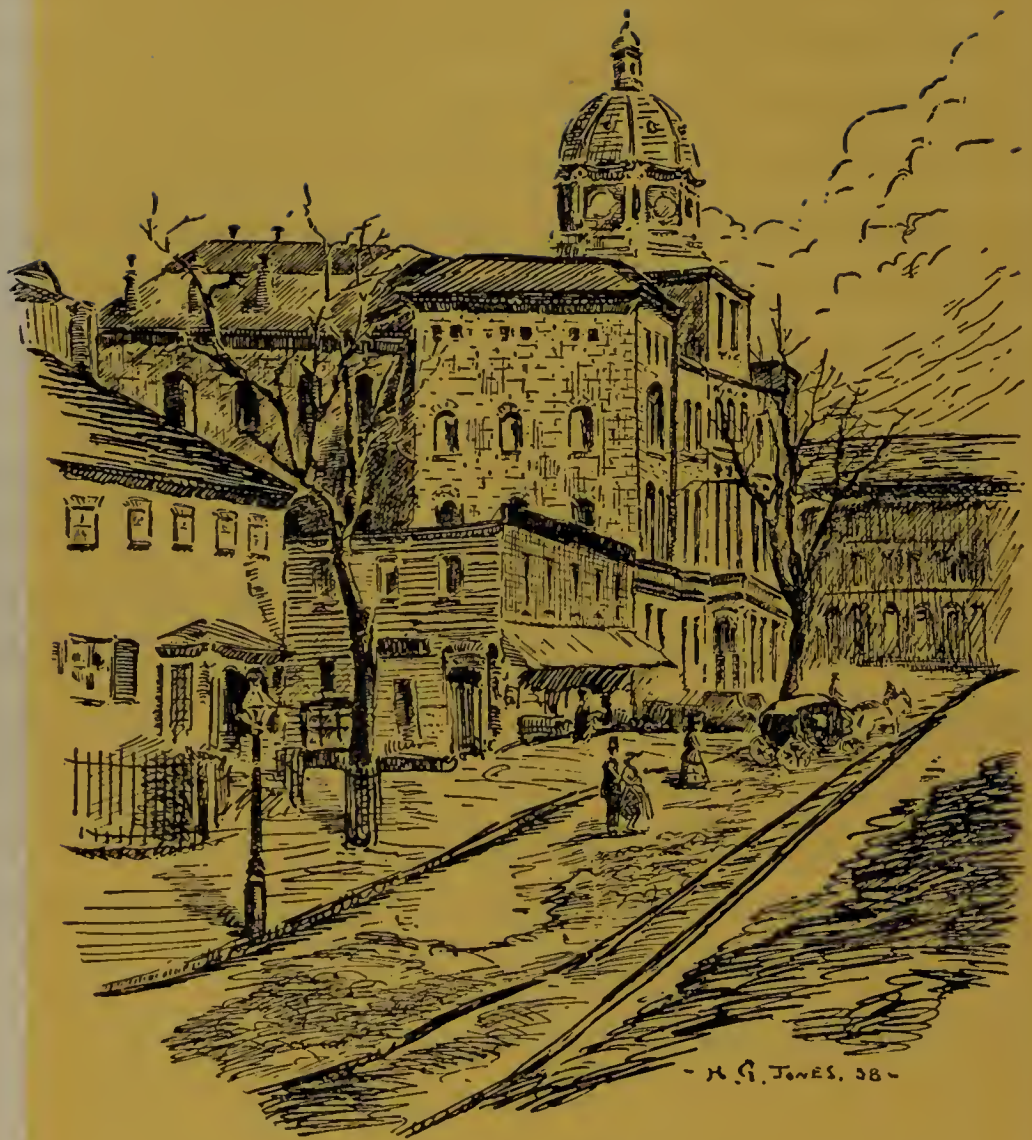
We owe the efficient modern nurse, who is so thoroughly trained in the art of helping the patient to live, to an English woman Florence Nightingale, who as a child was called by her



family “Little Sister of Mercy.” Brought up in English country life she loved birds and animals so much that she spent most of her youthful hours among them. Her mother found her one day making a nest in a bush for a robin that had broken a wing, and whenever the child found a bird that was hurt, a dog that was lame, any creature that was suffering, she took care of it herself, and invented ways by which it might be cured. She was a born nurse. When older she studied methods of nursing in the hospitals and prisons. Then came the Crimean war of 1853, and realizing that many of the soldiers would surely die for want of proper nursing, she organized for the first time in history a band of women nurses—in those days not even considered quite proper in military circles—and served throughout the war with remarkable success.

No practical advance ever made in medicine has brought greater comfort to the sick than this innovation of Florence Nightingale. Prior to her day nurses were domestic servants or members of the family, and were entirely untrained. Florence Nightingale made nursing a dignified profession, and the story of this woman who tended the sick and the poor is surely one of the most beautiful in history. It is in honor of her birth 126 years ago that hospitals everywhere celebrate May 12th as National Hospital Day.





*Old City Hall in which Charles Dickens gave his  
memorable lecture in 1868. Destroyed  
by fire in 1908*

---

## When Dickens Came to Portland

---

IF a vote were to be taken to decide the most beloved and popular boy character in all American fiction, I feel quite sure that the choice would be Tom Sawyer by Mark Twain. In English fiction it would undoubtedly be David Copperfield, by Charles Dickens, perhaps for the very reason that in both instances the stories are based on each author's own youthful experiences in early life—their joys and sorrows alike.

Quite recently Dickens admirers the world over celebrated the anniversary of his birth, and it is just 70 years ago next month that he made a visit to Portland, and gave a memorable reading from Christmas Carol and the famous trial scene from Pickwick. It is very evident from what we read that Dickens had no original intention of coming here, but as he was scheduled for a series of readings in Boston, and in need of money, he included Portland in his tour. He arrived with his party late on Saturday night, March 1867, and as the affair was not until Monday evening he was forced to stay over Sunday. He took rooms at the old Preble house which stood beneath the shade of four magnificent elm trees, where the Chapman Building now stands.

Unfortunately, we have no record of his impressions of the city, if he had any, beyond the remark he made later to a friend that he found the meals distasteful and poorly served—quite different from the enthusiastic comments of another English novelist, Anthony Trollope, who came to Maine in



1842. To him Portland had an air of supreme plenty. The faces of the people told of three satisfying meals a day and of digestive powers in proportion. The women were comely and sturdy, he said, and evidently well able to take care of themselves. "O, happy Portlanders, if they only knew of their own good fortune." He wished, however, that they would use something more durable than sand to pave their streets.

While Dickens kept closely to his hotel room, he was seen to take a short walk on Sunday morning, and if the meeting-goers had only known who that kindly featured and somewhat portly gentleman was whom they passed, they would, I am sure, have scanned his countenance more closely than they did. He must have made a striking appearance costumed in light trousers with a broad stripe down the side, a brown coat faced with velvet, a flowery vest decorated with a heavy watch chain, and a loose kimona-like top-coat with wide sleeves. A silk hat and light yellow gloves completed the picture.

We have no way of knowing in what direction he took his walk, but we do know that if he had turned left from the hotel, crossed old Market Square, which is now Monument Square, and continued down Middle Street, he would still have glimpsed tragic evidences of the Great Fire of two years before. It was an event that not only shocked the nation, but virtually wiped out the entire business section of this city, which at that time was mainly the area from Market Square to India Street and to the water's edge on Commercial Street.

Portland was an interesting place even in those days. In addition to a long list of distinguished citizens and statesmen, it could boast of a gallery of humorous and eccentric characters that would have matched any of the comic figures to be found in the pages of his own books. He would have found rich material in the strange genius of the celebrated John Neal, philosopher, wit and novelist, who was regarded by England at



that time as America's most original writer. Had he needed the attention of a barber he would most certainly have been directed to the famous tonsorial shop of John Todd, who counted most of the leading citizens as his personal friends, as well as patrons, and where one would find not the *Police Gazette*, as you might think, but the *Nation*, the *North American Review*, and *Scribners Magazine*. What humorous pen pictures he could have given us of the eccentric doings of Piggy Houston and his hog-wagon Trip-de-de of "who stole the butter fame" and old Coot Moody, the picturesque and bedraggled herb gatherer from Scarborough.

Dickens gave his reading at the old City Hall, which stood on the site of the present building, and the reporters noticed with interest that he brought his own stage props, a special gas burner, a screen and table. The hall was comfortably filled in spite of the high-priced tickets, and it was remarked that his delivery was poor, but by clever inflections of the voice he made the scenes from his stories very dramatic and realistic. If the audience was not wildly enthusiastic, they were certainly more polite than a group of strong-minded women in another town, who entered the hall quite late, dressed in bloomer costume, as intent on showing their trousers as they were to hear him speak. Dickens, it is said, was not even mildly amused.

Rising early next morning, he was seen by a group of Portland High School girls walking hurriedly up Congress Street, satchel in hand, on his way to the old Portland and Saco Terminal at the foot of State Street to catch the nine o'clock train to Boston. He was wearing a heavy Lincoln-like plaid shawl wrapped around his shoulders. One of the girls mischievously pulled off a piece of the fringe for a memento.

His glimpse of Congress Street at that time could not have been very prepossessing. With the exception of one or two newly erected business blocks and the handsome granite front

Mechanics Hall, the street was made up of small shops and stables with the disreputable-looking Hucksters' Row, a collection of shabby stalls and booths. Even then Deering Street was little more than a cow pasture. However, as he arrived at the crest of the hill, in the section of Congress Square, he would have noticed several imposing residences, of which a fine example is the present Cumberland Club House. But it was not until he turned the corner at State Street, that he saw the city at her fairest, a scene that is today very little changed. In the old Shepley House, now the Portland Club, the Churchill House, and the John Neal House were held the city's most elaborate social functions. St. Luke's Cathedral was then in the process of being built, and was the first edifice erected by Protestants in New England for a Cathedral.

Although Dickens was quite unconscious of the fact, there was traveling on the same train with him one of his greatest admirers, a little maid of twelve or thirteen, who even at that age had literally devoured his books. She had enthusiastically named her pet dog, the cat, the canary, even the cow and the rooster after her favorite characters from his books. She was going with her mother on a visit to Charleston, Massachusetts, and when the train stopped at North Berwick where all passengers to Boston had to change, she noticed her adored author standing on the platform chatting to a companion. She knew it was Dickens, because the night before, while her mother and aunt went to the reading, she had slipped out and saw him leaving the hotel for the hall.

"I knew him at once," she said later, describing his appearance, "the smiling mobile face rather highly colored, the brilliant eyes, the watch chain, and the red carnation in the button hole." After the train started, she slipped away from her mother and entered the carriage where the great man was chatting with Mr. Osgood, his publisher.



“Suddenly,” she says, “I saw Mr. Osgood arise, and with an apology to Mr. Dickens go into the smoking car. I never knew how it happened, but I planted myself timorously in the seat beside my adored one. Dickens was looking out of the window, but he turned, surprised to see me there, and said, ‘Bless my soul, where did you come from?’ ‘I came from Hollis, Maine,’ I stammered. ‘I am going to Charleston to visit my uncle. My Mother and her cousin went to your reading last night, but of course three couldn’t go from the same family, so I stayed at home. There was a lady with them who had only read *two* of your books.’ ‘Well, upon my word,’ he said, ‘you don’t mean to say that *you* have read them.’ ‘Of course,’ I replied, ‘every one of them except the two we are going to buy in Boston. Some of them six times.’ ‘Bless my soul,’ he ejaculated, ‘those long thick books, and you such a slip of a thing!’

“It was not long before my hand was in his, and I felt that I had never known anyone so well and so intimately. ‘Which book of mine do you like best,’ Dickens asked.’ ‘Oh, I answered with definite assurance of childhood, I like David Copperfield much the best. That is the one I have read six times.’ ‘Six times—good—good,’ he replied. ‘I am glad you like Davy, so do I, I like it best, too.’ Then Dickens took me back to my mother, introduced himself and disappeared in the next carriage with Mr. Osgood. That was my last glimpse of him, but pictures made in childhood are painted in bright hues, and this one has never faded.”

In later life this little enthusiastic disciple of Charles Dickens also became a famous author. She was Kate Douglass Wiggin, who, in addition to giving us the best pen portrait of Dickens ever written by an American, gladdened the whole world with her story, *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*.





---

## A Famous Portland Privateer

---

MY story this afternoon begins with a ship, as all good stories should. A remarkable ship and, of course, conceived in Portland and manned by Portland men, incidentally by some of our old leading families. A ship, too, that never encountered the vessel she could not outsail, never attacked a vessel she did not capture, and never was injured by enemy shot; and it was claimed her equal in speed never existed. Her name? The famous Portland privateer the *Dash* built by Porter Brothers, prominent Portland merchants, at the beginning of the 1812 war.

This was the time when Maine suffered so cruelly because of the embargo ordered against our shores by the British and the French. It was a time when none of our ordinary craft could with safety venture to sea and our merchant marine was literally paralyzed. Our country then, too, was practically without a navy as only five ships which could be called fighting ships were available to guard the Eastern coastline, while England alone had no less than eighty war vessels regularly cruising in New England waters.

So every kind of a boat that could float was pressed into American service, armed with what few guns they could muster, some even armed with only dummy guns, ingeniously shaped from ship's spars and mounted on wooden gun carriages. And thus was launched the most picturesque and adventurous chapter in the annals of American naval history, the period of the American privateer ship manned with devil-

daring heroes whose glorious deeds have been the inspiration of many writers.

The privateer was a ship armed and fitted out at private expense for the purpose of preying on enemy commerce to the profit of the owner, and during the war of 1812 American privateering assumed such proportions, that for a short period it became one of our leading industries.

These ships held legitimate commissions from the government quite distinct from those nefarious pirates of the seas, smugglers, and buccaneers. As a matter of fact, from the quarterdecks of some of these early privateers came several of the most famous of our navy heroes, such as Decatur, John Barry, Talbot and others. John Hawkins, the noted English privateer, actually held the high office of Treasurer of the Royal Navy during Queen Elizabeth's reign while he was cramming the hold of his ship *Jesus* with contraband in the shape of kidnapped slaves. The risks were very great but the profits of privateering when successful were equally great, and it attracted recruits from every walk of life: physicians, lawyers, army officers, politicians, staid merchants, even ministers of the gospel. When the American privateer *Revenge* was captured by the British, they found among her crew a woman in sailor's rig who had served on the *Revenge* for months, her real sex unknown even to her own shipmates.

At one period during the embargo there were as many as thirty privateers running out of this port alone but none ever reached the high pinnacle of fame that was attained by the *Dash*, the terror of the British merchant marine and the pride of Casco Bay; not even the hardly less notable sister privateer the *Dart*, built at Cape Elizabeth. It was this vessel, the *Dart*, by the way, which made the name Dart Spirit famous, or infamous, all depending on the point of view.

Now the Dart Spirit was none other than two hundred odd



puncheons of old London rum captured by the *Dart* on one of her successful voyages. It was one of the most famous cargoes ever to be landed in the conservative city of Portland. She had been chased by a British warship and barely escaped capture, heavily laden as she was with her precious freight. She couldn't fight as the rum casks piled up on her decks prevented the firing of her guns, so when the choice had to be made between dumping some of her cargo or the guns, to lighten her—well, the guns went overboard and the rum stayed aboard. She reached port just as a British fleet threatened invasion of the city, but the canny local merchants who owned the rum were taking no chances of letting it fall into the hands of the enemy, so it was hauled by ox-team to Saccarappa, now Westbrook, and auctioned off at \$2.50 per gallon.

It was without doubt the largest rum sale that had ever taken place in that village or in any Maine village. And for nearly two generations afterward this bottled "Old Dart" as it was termed was the standard among local experts. It retailed at fancy prices and the connoisseurs grew quite eloquent when describing its particularly smooth flavor and potency. Its reputation even grew legendary with the years and long afterward it was the popular custom for the genial host when entertaining a special select party of friends to set before them a bottle of this nectar of the gods. For for the benefit of the younger generation and uninformed, he would then dilate with great pride and at great length on the history of this famous spirit. It is suspected, however, that it made many appearances long after the original stock had been exhausted.

Portland's greatest glory, however, was never in the building of ships, but rather in the sailing of them, and it was deemed a signal honor to be pointed out as belonging to the crew of Porter's famous vessel, the *Dash*.

All the young bloods of the town were anxious to serve on

her, and like the movie actors of today, they were the heroes of the school-girl and the debutante, with their white duck trousers and blue jackets, and jaunty hats labeled in big white letters, the *Dash*. Under the command of Captain Cammett she made many captures. He hated the very sight of a Union Jack and was always spoiling for a fight. She reached the zenith of her fame, however, under the captaincy of John Porter, a younger brother of the owners, a mere lad of twenty-four. In a voyage of less than three weeks, he captured six prizes, a record unsurpassed by any other American privateer. And then, came dire tragic disaster, for on her next trip out at the very height of her career, she sailed away and was never heard of again.

No vessel ever sailed from Portland under more successful and auspicious conditions than did the *Dash* on her last fatal cruise. No vessel had been sped on her way with more ceremony and anxious prayers for her safety. About the middle of January 1815, unconscious of the fact that peace had already been declared between England and this country—as news traveled slowly in those days—the rakish little craft with her tall tapering masts crowded with light canvas was dashing up and down the harbor. Like a race horse, she was impatient to be off on further adventures. Every member of the crew was aboard except the young captain, who wedded only a few months before, was bidding his young wife farewell, at their little home on Essex Street, now Franklin Street.

Could he have had some foreboding of impending tragedy? It had been noticed that he had seemed to be depressed and disturbed. A warning gun had come from the impatient ship but not heeding the summons he still lingered with his wife. Even after he had turned the corner of his street, he was seen to hesitate as if to turn back, but hearing a second gun he waved a final adieu and hurried aboard. In the harbor, ready



to sail too, was a newly launched privateer from Portsmouth, eager to try her speed against the Portland champion. Passing the Portland headlight, the *Dash* took a southerly course and by the end of the next day was well in the lead. A gale sprang up and the Portsmouth vessel fearing the dangers of the Georges shoals, altered her course and came safely out of the storm. That was the last that mortal eye ever saw of the *Dash*. No wreckage, no floating spar, nor splintered boat ever reached the shore or appeared to offer mute testimony of the tragic end. For months even years afterwards, the relatives of the lost loved ones refused to give up hope and daily there was a stream of mothers, wives, and sweethearts sadly climbing the rickety stairs of the old observatory seeking news in vain.

On the very night of the sailing amidst the fearful snow-storm that raged on the outside, the ill fated bride with her sister and cousins were gathered at her father's home on Federal Street. As they were talking of the vessel a violent gust of wind shook the little house and something was heard to fall in the parlor. One of the party immediately went to investigate and returned with one of the fireplace tiles that had fallen from its place. The startling incident cast a gloom over the party and there were hushed mutterings of impending tragedy, that the *Dash* had gone. Like so many other famous and ill-fated ships she had joined the shadowy fleet of ghost ships whose unhappy spirits are ever said to haunt our waters.

Ah! you may give a sceptical shake of the head at the mention of ghost ships, but to this very day sober-minded, matter-of-fact business men in the vicinity of Mahone Bay in Nova Scotia will tell you of the Teaser light, a weird apparition which at certain times frequents the waters of Mahone Bay. It is the ghost ship of another ill-fated Portland privateer, the *Younger Teaser* which for some mysterious reason was blown up by an evil member of her crew. Only eight escaped alive.



The remains of the captain were buried off the coast the next morning, sewn in a hammock and weighted by round shot. The legend is that the strange, mysterious Teaser light, in the form of a ship, will appear until the dead man is free of his shroud and round-shot and joins the spirits of his murdered comrades.

What flecks the outer gray beyond  
The sundown's golden trail?  
The white flash of a sea-bird's wing  
Or gleam of slanting sail?

Let young eyes watch from neck to point,  
And sea-worn elders pray—  
The ghost of what was once a ship  
Is sailing up the bay!

---

## The Joys of Portland Weather

---

LET'S talk about the weather — if for no other reason than that this is the season of the year, the vacation season, when most people talk about it; and hasn't it been the pleasant way of beginning a conversation since time immemorial? Moreover, it is a subject that everyone is competent to discuss, with equal authority, as really most of us know nothing about it. Don't you recall that bit of doggerel verse:

The statesman throws his shoulders back and straightens  
out his tie,  
And says, my friends, unless it rains the weather will be dry.  
And when this thought into our brains has percolated thro'  
We common people nod our heads and loudly cry how true!

And then, what makes it so simple a topic is that there are only two kinds of weather, good and bad. While we may rail fret and storm at it, it does just what it pleases and never pleases to do the same thing twice. Mark Twain once remarked "that everybody complains about the weather but nobody apparently does anything about it," but I feel most strongly that something very emphatic should be said in praise of Maine weather, especially in Southern Maine and in our own city of Portland.

We all know, and I think take too calmly, the tremendous amount of loose thinking and erroneous conception regarding our weather that exists among millions of people outside of

our state. They sincerely believe, at least those who have never visited Maine, that we are the pitiful inhabitants of a frozen wasteland for at least nine months of the year. I must confess that I have heard some of our own people go into ecstasy when describing the climate of the so-called sun-kissed shores of California, and the wonders of Florida weather, but I have never, or hardly ever, noticed a State o' Mainer raise the slightest degree of temperature or excitement on behalf of the weather in his own state.

There are few of us, I am sure, who at one time or another in the quiet reaches of our heart, have not cherished a secret desire to visit the tropical paradise of Hawaii, which we have been given to understand is a land of heavenly sunshine. Yet, believe it or not, it is a surprising fact that we in Portland get more sunshine on an average during our vacation season than do the whole of the Hawaiian Islands during their vacation season, which is from November to February. It is an amazing truth that Portland is blessed with more sunshine on an average, comparing vacation seasons, than is Florida or even the much heralded Southern California.

On the unimpeachable authority of the local weather bureau, our city and the whole section of Southern Maine enjoys an abundance of sunshine and vacation weather not exceeded anywhere on the Atlantic coast. Ah! you say, what about our snows? Well, the average snowfall in Portland during an officially recorded period of twenty years, is in fact much less than the average amounts in Buffalo, Rochester, and most parts of upper New York State.

What a fascinating study meteorology must be! It is, in its scientific stages, a comparatively new art as the first United States Weather Bureau was not established until 1870. But Portland had its own original weather sage as early as 1810, in the person of Captain Lemuel Moody, who diligently kept a



daily record of what he called the "thermetrical conditions of the outside air" on top of the Observatory.

And isn't it remarkable how our city has seemed to escape again and again the severe storms of destruction which plague most cities throughout the country. The fearful tornadoes and hurricanes that frequent the West, even the vacation land of Florida seem very remote to us down here. However, we did have a mild example of one back in 1929 which removed a corner of the roof of the Marine Hospital and carried away a part of the Friends' Meeting House at Riverton. Excitement enough was caused for a moment or two according to the description of a nurse at the hospital. "There was a violent turbulent motion apparent in the cloud mass she said and a great roaring before the crash. For a moment it looked as though we were all going into eternity."

The terrors of earthquakes too, have touched us but slightly here in our safe haven of the State of Maine. Parson Smith of the First Parish Church in old Falmouth mentions one in his diary about 1755. "In the night came a most amazing shock of an earthquake which lasted two minutes. I thought the house would shake to pieces." According to the early Indians one occurred in 1664, which actually swallowed up a whole river.

It is interesting to note that the coldest day Portland has ever experienced since the official records have been kept was on December 30th in 1917, when the glass touched twenty-one below zero, and the hottest was on July 4, 1911, when the temperature reached almost 104 degrees. That was the one occasion in which Portland rivaled the proud boast of Washington D. C., as on that day you could in all probability have fried an egg on our bare pavements.

For the edification of lovers of statistics—the hottest spot in the world, is Massaua on the Red Sea, and at the opposite end of the scale, is a little village in Siberia with an unprounc-

able name, where they endure life at ninety below. The Kasi Hills of Assam in India has the distinction of being the wettest place and the driest spots are in Africa and Chile.

The phenomena of weather is amazingly interesting. Here is just one little fact which I am sure will come as a surprise to most of you. When you show the visitors, with pardonable pride, the glories of our sunsets as viewed from the Western Promenade, offer a mental prayer of thanksgiving to the good people of New Hampshire and Vermont who omit to tar their gravel highways, as it is the sun's rays reflecting through the veil of dust arising from these roads, that give us the most gorgeous of all sunsets.

I have just been reading, and enjoying, Kenneth Robert's new book, *Trending into Maine*, but what a hardened materialist he is. He would with one fell swoop shatter forever our lovable, and I think quite harmless belief in age-old tradition and the romance of homespun legends. Well, for that matter so would our friends at the Weather Bureau. Take for instance the very popular custom of weather forecasting, one of man's earliest forms of prophecy. No longer, if we accept the dictums of the experts, can we believe the weather prognosticians of the sailor, the farmer, or the fisherman.

We must entirely discount and beware of such time-honored proverbs as: "Rainbow at night, sailors' delight, rainbow at morning, sailors take warning," or, "If it rains before seven, 'twill cease before eleven."

We must, too, cast into the limbo of forsaken things of weatherlore such delightful old customs practised by our village soothsayers, who obtain advance notice of weather changes by hanging up a bunch of seaweed; testing the thickness of corn husks, that are supposed to portend a hard winter; and the mysterious weather warnings of a certain type of goosebone.



But age-old traditions and the pleasantries of weather lore will still persist I venture to say despite the experts and the novelists. There has always been a staunch belief in the relation of the phases of the moon to the weather. In fact, so firmly established is this belief that many farmers of today will not plant unless the moon is in the favored quarter, notwithstanding the declaration of the experts, that:

The moon and the weather  
May change together,  
But a change in the moon  
Does not change the weather.

So, I'm afraid that Longfellow who was once a professor at Bowdoin, and who should have known better, was grievously in error when he caused the old sailor in the wreck of the *Hesperus* to give this warning:

I pray thee put into yonder port  
For fear a hurricane.  
Last night the moon had a golden ring  
And to-night no moon we see.

And then, there is the ancient and astonishing practice of the art of making rain. These rain-doctors still ply their trade today even in this country and their materials range from prayers and incantations, to smoke and pyrotechnics, and the firing of heavy guns to produce much needed rains. The theory that the effect of heavy gunfire has a decided effect on the moisture of the air is apparently still strong in England. As recently as 1911, a member of Parliament in all seriousness requested the British War Department to postpone heavy gun practice on their coasts until the harvests were safely gathered in. The credulous however, may take satisfaction in the un-



usually heavy and quite unexplainable rainstorms that occurred in Europe during the height of the Battles of the Somme in the World War. We are told too, in the Bible, that Elijah prayed fervently that it might not rain, and it rained not on the earth for three years and six months.

Paradoxically enough, in the opinion of the ardent winter sports enthusiasts, we haven't had enough snow this so-called frozen north of ours during the past few years. Where are the snows of yesteryear? They sigh. Well, we have had a few man-sized snowstorms in the past.

The winter of 1920, saw no less than 33 inches, and in March of that year, Portland was for the first time in the memory of its inhabitants entirely isolated from the outside world. Even the mails, whose boast that nothing stops them, couldn't complete deliveries for three days.

In one of his early notebooks, Hawthorne the novelist, makes several references to a little girl named Betsy Tarbox. At the age of three she lost her parents in the severe snowstorm of 1819, and was adopted by an aunt of the writer who lived in Raymond Village. It was one of those distressing tragedies of early pioneer life that rarely if ever occur in these days. The Tarbox family, consisting of mother and father and four children, the eldest a girl of twelve lived in a cabin on Raymond Cape. Hawthorne spent the summers of his early boyhood on this very spot. It had been a very severe winter with storm following storm, cutting off all communications with their neighbors. Their provisions became nearly exhausted, and the father was compelled to set off on the long journey to get a bag of corn ground at the village mill. He reached the mill safely and with the bag on his shoulders started to retrace his steps. Meanwhile another storm came up, and within a short distance of his house, he sank down exhausted, unable to take another step.

He called for help and his wife, anxiously awaiting his return, heard his cries and quickly left everything to go to his assistance. She soon found that she could make no headway in the deep drifts, so returned, and donning some of her husband's clothing, reached him while he was still alive. She couldn't move him, so taking off her coat, she covered him the best she could and set off herself in the direction of the nearest homestead for help. After a short struggle, her strength failed her and she sank down exhausted.

The children, left alone in the darkness, huddled around the fire under the protection of the little girl of twelve, who kept blowing the horn throughout most of the night, trying to attract attention to their plight. But the storm closed them in for three days and three nights before the alarmed neighbors could reach them. After a search they found the frozen bodies of the parents, and in the distress and excitement, the little tot of three had wandered off alone and almost lost her life before she was rescued and taken into the Hawthorne family as one of their own.

The phenomenon of our glorious Indian summer and the origin of its name has never been convincingly explained. Traditionally it is expected to arrive about the middle of October and is characterized by the hazy air, the coloring of the foliage, and the slight tinge of frostiness in the evening atmosphere. Explanation has been given that the mild spell of later Autumn gave the Indians an opportunity to come into the settlements to trade, and as past history shows, a chance to attack the settlers. An exhaustive review of the subject by the Weather Bureau some years ago disclosed that no use of the term Indian summer occurred in print until 1794.

On April 25, 1837, there occurred in our city one of the most extraordinary astral phenomena and at the same time the most startling coincidence probably on record. The Portland



Sacred Music Society was giving a performance of Haydn's *Creation* at the Second Parish Church. During the performance a marvellous thing happened, for one of the most spectacular appearances of the aurora borealis ever seen in this part of the country occurred. So brilliant was the display on this occasion and so strange was the fact of its occurring at the time it did that for more than seventy-five years afterward references were made to it.

While the society was singing the chorus there came the most extensive and brilliant display in the memory of the oldest inhabitant. "The entire heavens were aglow, being enveloped in a continuous and highly colored light, streaming from the zenith to the horizon. Ever changing in form and hue making a scene of grandeur and beauty indescribable. The performance halted while the audience left the church to behold the wonderful transformation of radiant beauty which filled the heavens. Those who took part in the production of the *Creation* had reason to feel as they stepped out of the hall to the snow-covered sidewalks and beheld the gloriously resplendent heavens, that it was as though the Creator Himself had taken this method of bestowing His benediction upon the performance of Sacred Oratorio, a marvellous manifestation of celestial approval!"



---

## An Historic Bed Quilt

---

ONE of the surprising things about life, I think, is the amazing fact of how often we find history repeating itself, and how history, too, is full of paradoxes and strange contradictions. Now if we glance at any of the school text books, or encyclopedias, for that matter, we read that the famous Declaration of Independence was the creation and inspiration of Thomas Jefferson. Shortly before his death, he himself wrote the following inscription to be inscribed on his tomb: "Here was buried Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence."

But research has brought to light strange evidence that might well cause us to have grave doubts whether Jefferson actually is the real author of this famous document. In the early days of the republic, contemporary with Jefferson, when people of that time should have known, there were many who questioned the matter. As a matter of fact, Jefferson himself never claimed authorship until he was past eighty years of age and all the active figures in that great historical drama were long since dead.

Some six months before the American Revolution there appeared a small book that not only caused a sensation in the young colony, but startled and interested the whole world. It was called *Common Sense* and was written by a young Englishman named Thomas Paine then living in this country. He, strange to say, was intensely partisan and a strong sympathizer in our early struggles with the Mother

country. It was a fiery plea for independence from all oppressors, a great battle-cry for freedom, and it naturally attracted a wide following among the most prominent men of that time. President-to-be Monroe said of him: "The citizens of the United States can never look back to the era of their own revolution without remembering, with those of other distinguished patriots, the name of Thomas Paine. The services which he rendered them in their struggle for liberty have made an impression of gratitude which will never be erased while they continue to merit the character of a just and generous people." Benjamin Franklin too was his personal friend, and one day Franklin handed Jefferson a rough draft of a declaration written by Paine with the solemn assurance that Jefferson could trust the writer never to claim its authorship. And, so it is said, this draft with a few changes made by the members of the committee and Jefferson himself was sent to Congress and duly adopted. So, who really is the true author of that great document which is regarded the world over as the most historic and important piece of writing ever put to paper — Paine or Jefferson?

And now history repeats itself and with a strange parallel. Again let us turn to the text books. We are told that the planning and designing of Washington, D. C., perhaps the most beautiful city in the world, is entirely due to the genius of a Major l' Enfant, an almost obscure French soldier who had come over here during the Revolution. He had wormed himself into the good graces of General Washington by doing odd jobs, such as decorating the White House for military balls and festivities, designing fresco work, planning parades, and all that sort of thing. Apparently he was not even a surveyor, but a great dreamer and quite impractical, who had an extravagant vision of what a city should be like.

When it was first proposed to build a nation's capital there



was considerable agitation about the location of it. New Yorkers wanted their city chosen for the honor. So did Philadelphia and Baltimore. But General Washington was a surveyor from early life and an experienced civil engineer. He, and he alone, planned the nation's capital, decided the location for it and carried out his own plan. He selected a committee to help him, and L'Enfant was given a minor job helping the committee. But the Frenchman was ambitious and he conceived his own plan which he did his best to substitute in the place of Washington's ideas. He went to Mt. Vernon again and again, begging and imploring the General to adopt it. In fact, he made himself such a nuisance not only to Washington, but to the members of the committee and some prominent citizens, that Washington was forced to discharge him. Embittered at his failure he spent the rest of his life doing minor jobs and was buried a pauper in an obscure grave.

The years passed and the city of Washington began to take shape. In 1902, Teddy Roosevelt was president and one of his greatest personal friends was Jusserand, Ambassador of the French to this country. A movement started among a few citizens and architects to honor a man named Major Peter l'Enfant. It is safe to say most people had never heard of such a man. Roosevelt however became interested in the movement, undoubtedly at the request of his friend the French Ambassador, with the result that the remains of the Major were disinterred and a great funeral followed, with the French Ambassador giving the eulogistic oration on the man from his own country who had created the city of Washington. And thus started the legend of Peter l'Enfant and the nation's capital.

But what had become of General Washington's own plan that he designed himself and which he presented to Congress



on July 4, 1792? By one of those strange twists of fate it had been lost to history until a few years ago. Now by an astonishing and almost unbelievable chain of circumstances in which our own State of Maine plays an all-important part, comes an amazing story that might well change all history.

Back in the trying and unsettled days in this country, after the Revolutionary War, a Samuel Woodman, a native of Southampton, New Hampshire, had mustered out of the army and resumed his former life as a seaman. At that time, Philadelphia was the accepted capital of our country, and it was the chief port of call for all shipping. While ashore there one day, this seaman picked up what he thought would make a nice souvenir gift for his wife. Little did he dream of the significance of that casual purchase. It was nothing more than four yards of linen cloth, but each yard contained a curious printed plan of the proposed city of Washington stamped on the material. Later, when his vessel put in at Newburyport, he obtained leave to visit his wife, and when he arrived at his modest cabin in the then wilds of New Hampshire, we may be sure he had lots to tell her of his adventures on land and sea. We can well imagine him saying, "And in Philadelphia everybody's talking about the new wonderful city that General Washington is going to build on the banks of the Potomac. And, Anna, I've brought you something from Philadelphia—a gift that I picked up in a shop on the wharf front. See! there's a picture of the General on a map."

"Oh! that's nice, Samuel!" is the reply, "Let's keep it. Let's put it away safely and some day perhaps we may have a daughter and it will belong to her."

Years later a daughter Mary was born to the couple, and on her eighteenth birthday the mother gave her this curious piece of cloth for her hope chest. Mary there and then decided to make a quilt, so she arranged the cloth with a border and

wove enough flax for a cloth back. In 1831, she married George Flanders, a native of the same village and in April of that year they decided to move to Cornville, near Madison, Maine to make their home. There were no trains in those days, and few stage coaches—and that mode of traveling was far too expensive for them. So they piled their belongings, including the precious quilt, on a crude ox-wagon and made the long weary trip over mountains, through virgin forests and primitive roads to their destination. The years rolled on and Mary died a half century later, little dreaming that the old quilt she had loved and cherished so long would some day make history.

A few years ago, Dr. Hackett of Kennebunk, a keen student of Americana glancing through an antique shop here in Portland noticed an old quilt with some strange maps sewn in the center. On closer examination he saw it was marked "Plan of the City of Washington" and in the corner of each map was a picture of George Washington, his coat of arms, and underneath, the Latin words *W. Sculpsit*. Intensely interested, he inquired further and learned the story of the quilt, and how it had been in the possession of one family for more than two-hundred years. He took his find to Washington and the officials were astounded that their files contained no copies of this map, nor could they locate any reference to it. However, Doctor Hackett was convinced that he had made a great discovery, and devoted himself to the task of tracing a very important missing link in the chain, confirmatory evidence that General Washington sent this very plan with his report to the Congress.

Then, one day in August, 1935, Doctor Hackett found the proof of his belief. And, again, by a strange coincidence, the evidence came to light in our own city. In an old junk shop on Fore Street, he picked up a copy of the "Gazette of the



United States," published in Philadelphia, January 4, 1792. It had been found among a bundle of old papers that had been lying in an attic for more than 140 years. In the first column on the editorial page, it mentions this plan was being sent to Congress by George Washington.

I have had the privilege of seeing this historic quilt that has been treasured with loving care through all the years. Apparently the fabric has never been touched with water, and yet apart from a slight discoloration it looks just as fresh as though it were yesterday that Mary's deft fingers had made the whole into one piece. And what quaint, exquisite stitches! As was evidently the custom in those days, she had worked her initials in cross stitch in one corner, and quilted the cloth with many small stitches in the shape of a fan. Even to my masculine eyes it is a beautiful thing.

And so ends the drama of a simple quilt that may yet figure largely in American history, and in which our own city of Portland played an all important part. It is further proof, I think, to all, of the wide genius of George Washington—not only was he the father of our country but the father, too, of the nation's capital.



---

## Old Grand Trunk Depot and Fort Loyall

---

WASN'T it Bobbie Burns who wrote:

“O wad some power the giftie gie us  
To see oursels as ithers see us.”

But the difficulty there is that we fail to see ourselves as others see us. Now we are quite aware of the extraordinary and quite erroneous impression the outside world has of a State o' Mainer. From their point of view, we are definitely different, quite peculiar, reticent, almost taciturn, and, of course, coldly conservative. We Maine Yankees, you will note that I use the personal pronoun, “we Maine Yankees,” even though I had the irreparable misfortune not to be born in the good old State of Maine. However, I hope I measurably atoned for the error by marrying into a good Maine family, so that makes me somewhat respectable. So, if you will permit me, I shall, with very great pleasure, consider myself a Maine Yankee.

We Maine Yankees, then, are of course quite distinct from a Connecticut or a Massachusetts Yankee, because, after all, we sometimes do have a different point of view — witness the last election. And, by the way, it is a very much disputed point just how Northern New England people came to be styled Yankees. Most historians agree that the term comes from a corruption of the French word for English, *Anglais*. The In-

dians had trouble with the pronunciation; the nearest they could get to it was Yengees or Yankees.

But it is interesting to note that the words "Yankee Doodle" with the identical tune we use, was in common usage in England in the days of Cromwell, and to go further, the famous Yankee twang, according to an English writer, originated in Cornwall, England. To confirm this he says Cornwall and Devonshire, two adjoining counties or shires, were the only places in the whole British Isles where the writings of Artemus Ward could be read without a glossary. Well, that's a very plausible theory when it is considered that Maine was settled chiefly by men from these very counties, descendants of the lusty, hardy roustabouts who checked for all time the ambitious aspirations of the Spanish King when they shattered his Spanish Armada in the 16th century.

Then, there is the term "Down East Yankees," but just what is a "Down East Yankee"? A Massachusetts critic, who I suppose would consider himself a Yankee, defines them as a "curious admixture of hardiness, shrewdness, and downright cussedness." I like Robert Tristram Coffin's version better. He says they are a fine smart people. They farm while they fish, hunt while they hay, lumber while they manufacture, keep cows and chickens and horses, while they build ships and go around the world, and they are full of sharp wisdom and tart proverbs, cranky, independent, and witty all at once.

Granting all these attributes that go to the making of a State o' Mainer, there is another curious phase or side to his nature which has been entirely overlooked, and that is his ever-willingness to take a little flurry, a sporting chance, whether it be in a contest of log-rolling, ox-team pulling, or a boat race. To prove my statement, I am going to tell you about one of the most unique sporting propositions ever waged, not only in Maine, but on the whole continent. To the sporting



spirit of a few fishermen and stage-coach drivers, all Maine Yankees, who just wouldn't be licked, we owe, believe it or not, the building of the Grand Trunk Railroad Terminal here in Portland.

About ninety-one years ago a group of local ambitious citizens, knowing that Canada was seeking a coast outlet in New England, conceived the idea of building a railroad from Portland to Montreal. Two companies were to be organized, one of which would begin at Montreal, and the other at Portland, and the two would meet at Island Pond. Committees were formed, meetings were held, and voluminous statistics were gathered to impress the people in Maine and Canada as to the great advantages which would result from such an endeavor. Public subscriptions were called for, and in less than a year more than a million dollars was collected, over three quarters of the amount being obtained from Portland alone. Then suddenly Boston became interested in the idea, and vigorously countered with a plan of building a railroad from Boston through New Hampshire and Vermont to Montreal.

Then the fun began, and the war of the century was on between the citizens of Portland and Boston as to which city should secure the Grand Trunk Terminal. The newspapers of each state were filled with satirical and acrimonious debate as to which city was better fitted for the honor. Among the many claims on the part of the Boston people was that their harbor was superior, and that it was entirely free from ice even in the coldest of winters. But it so happened that a Maine deputation secretly visited the harbor in mid-January to see for themselves and found it filled with floating ice, while our harbor was all clear.

The claim was made that Boston could certainly deliver the English mail to Montreal more quickly through their port than could Portland, which brought about the famous wager back



in the fabulous forties, that went down in history as the Marathon of the decade, and in the end decided for all time the fate of a railroad terminal. Not a little money was won and lost by the sporting element of the rival cities. It took the form of a race to deliver two letters from England to the postmaster at Montreal, one letter to be routed through the Portland port, and the other through Boston. The one which reached Montreal first would decide the issue. So in March, 1847, it was arranged that two steamers should leave Liverpool at the same time each with a letter, one to sail to Boston, and the other to Portland. The overland journeys from these cities to Montreal were to be made with relays of horses. It was a thrilling and exciting time, as it attracted the attention of both continents. It was the feverish topic of everyone, fishermen, farmers, and business men alike throughout the state. One enterprising baker on Fore Street was said to have cleaned up with an innovation called the terminal cake, a round sweet frosted concoction that became extremely popular.

In those days, it usually took ten days for the sea trip, but long before the ship was really due, day and night watches took turns with the telescope at the Observatory to catch the first sight of her. After many false alarms, the sight of smoke on the horizon and later the lines of a steamer convinced the watchers that it was the mail boat. Then came an excited yell from one of the watchers, an old fisherman from the banks, "By gorry, thar she is. I can tell a Limey from the cut of 'er jib," and all was action. A tug was immediately dispatched to meet her, so no time would be lost.

You can't beat a Down East Yankee when it comes to conniving and shrewdness, you know, especially when anything important is at stake. Orin Hobbs, a well-known stage driver of his day, was waiting with a fast horse at the foot of India Street, and as soon as the tug pulled in, late in the afternoon,

the mail was hastily strapped on his back, and off he dashed, Paul Revere style, for Gray, where a two-horse pung was waiting for him to drive to his next changing place at the Poland Spring House. Snow was falling when he got to Shaker Hill, and a slight accident upset the pung, but that did not stop him, for grabbing one of the horses he rode bareback to Welchville. There, another fast team awaiting him, he drove on to South Paris, Woodstock, North Rumford, and Upton through a country of few good roads and deep snow.

At this juncture, another driver took the mail and continued on to Colebrook, Richmond and Longueil, P. Q. Here G. G. Waterhouse, a veteran Portland Stage driver took up the race with four fast white horses and a gaily decorated sleigh. He made a spectacular appearance dressed in a foxskin cap, a wolfskin overcoat, and wolf robes, holding his immense figure erect, with the American flag streaming out beside him from the whipsocket. The last lap was driven at a furious gait arriving in Montreal just four hours ahead of his rival, the Boston sleigh. The 250 mile journey was completed in the unparalleled time of eighteen hours and six minutes, and demonstrated very conclusively that Portland was the logical spot for the terminus of the Grand Trunk railroad.

The building was erected in 1858, and in its day was considered the largest and finest of its kind in the country. It escaped the great fire of 1866, and its large shed was used for a short time by the bishop of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception to celebrate mass after their church was destroyed. Eventually it was torn down to make room for the present terminal in 1901. The very site occupied by this building is hallowed in the tragic memory of Fort Loyall, which in 1690, was destroyed by the French and Indians, and the occupants, nearly two hundred men, women and children, cruelly massacred by the Indians.



The fort was the largest fortification on the coast, and consisted of a number of log buildings surrounded by an outer fence in palisade form, with loopholes for musketry fire. At different points of vantage, were mounted eight cannon. There was no Commercial Street in those days, and Fore Street was the waterfront. It commenced at Jordan's Point where the buildings of the Portland Company now stand, and extended to the foot of High Street. Longfellow recalls the Fore Street of 1820, with its black wharves and slips and the Spanish sailors with bearded lips. Then, piers were piled high with barrels of Jamaica rum, hogsheads of molasses from Porto Rico, and thousands of feet of lumber hauled in from the surrounding country by ox teams. Portland was a maritime center of importance in those days, and seamen of all nationalities were to be seen in port. The waters of Casco Bay came almost up to the foot of Hancock Street, and Longfellow speaks of the sandy beach which used to be a popular bathing place, and a favorite location for the baptism rites of religious denominations.

Back in 1690, old Casco consisted only of a small collection of scattered homes near the foot of India Street, surrounded by primitive forests, and it was for the purpose of destroying this little settlement and Fort Loyall, that a force of five hundred Indians and Frenchmen were despatched from Canada. Some fishermen had given warning of the approach of their fleet of canoes sailing down the coast from the mouth of the Kennebec, and Captain Sylvanus Davis, commander of the fort, had ordered the inhabitants into the garrison for protection. The Indians landed at the base of Munjoy Hill, and a scouting force of thirty men under the leadership of Lieut. Clark was sent out to intercept them. On making their way through the thick woods, they noticed some cattle in a clearing staring intently at a spot in the bush as though hesitating to enter. The scouts knew instantly what that meant, that Indians were hidden there. With



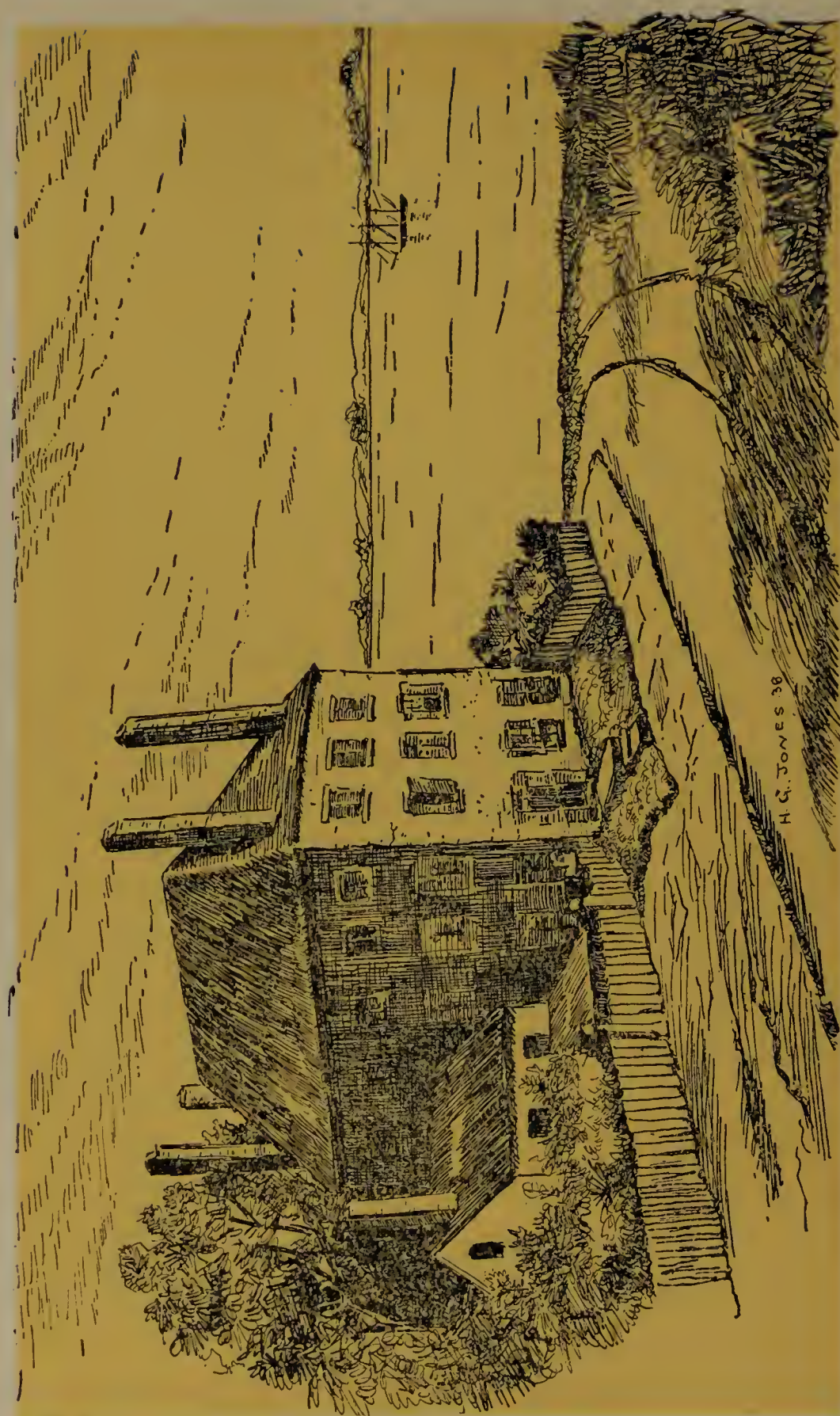
a wild yell, they rushed toward the enemy, but lost thirteen men and their leader at the first volley. The rest fled in safety to the fort.

With only seventy fighting men left to defend the two hundred occupants, Captain Davis heroically kept the enemy off until the greater part of his force was killed or wounded. For five days and four nights they held the fort until the Indians under the shelter of the bluff dug a mine under the fort, and dragged an ox cart loaded with tar and birch bark to set fire to it. It was then a case of being burned to death or surrender and the commander was obliged to parley. An order in French from the ranks of the enemy reached the ears of the soldiers in the fort and Captain Davis called to them: "Are there any French among you, and will you agree to give us quarter?"

The answer came back, "Yes," that they would guarantee the safety of all the people in the fort and promised on their sacred honor to send them to the nearest English town. The garrison surrendered on that promise, but the French officers with fiendish deliberation cruelly abandoned them to their fate. The Indians mercilessly butchered the wounded, and then scalped the women and children, sparing only the Captain and a few others whom they took to Quebec.

The little village of Casco was completely destroyed, and for many years the entire province of Maine east of Wells was abandoned. For two years the bodies of the victims of the massacre lay about the ruins of the fort, unburied, exposed to the beasts and bleaching suns, and it was not until 1692, that Sir William Phipps on his way to Pemaquid sailed in here and buried the bones — where, no one knows.

Little of the history of this ghastly affair has ever been written, and until a year ago no tablet marked this historic spot, one of the most important in the history of our state.



*The birthplace of Longfellow as it looked  
in the year 1807*



---

## A Visit to Grandpa's Farm

---

WHEN Shakespeare wrote his famous couplet about the incompatibility of old age and extreme youth he must have quite overlooked the adoration of grandparent for grandchild, the love that sometimes passeth all understanding. But then Shakespeare never lived long enough to have a grandchild, so how was he to know anything about that strange twist of human nature which seems to convert even the sternest of fathers into one of utter indulgence when it comes to a grandchild.

And certainly Old Grandpa General Peleg Wadsworth, hero of Revolutionary Wars, was no exception to the rule. Nothing in later life gladdened his heart so much as a contemplated visit from his favorite twelve year old grandson from Portland. For that matter, no event was more delightful to the youngster than a visit to Grandpa, and when he was old enough to travel alone his greatest joy was to board the stage to take the thirty-seven mile journey to grandpa's farm in the little town ship of Hiram.

The old General called it a farm in contrast, I suppose, to his substantial, all-brick homestead in Portland. But in reality it was, for those days a mansion, a great colonial house boasting a half-score of fireplaces, a hall large enough to allow the training of a squad of militia, and where hospitality was maintained in a manner befitting a gentleman of the old school. It was situated in the midst of an estate of nearly seven thousand acres, a grant from a grateful government for his heroic services in the war.



Long after the military style of dress was put aside by the colonists, and, in fact up to the time of his death in 1830, the General wore his picturesque Continental costume, a bright scarlet coat with buff trimmings, powdered hair, three cornered hat, white stockings and silver buckled shoes.

The young lad who so idolized his grandfather was not at all military. For his age he had quite a serious turn of mind. He did not, like most youths, incline much to outdoor sports and pastimes, fishing, boating, and so forth, but revelled in books and studies, and Greek classics. Next perhaps to being with his grandfather, he liked most to idle through the extensive gardens, day dreaming, and more often than not jotting down stray fragments of poetry that would continually flit through his youthful head.

His arrival at the farm would invariably be heralded by a "Heigh! Heigh! you young rascal," from the General with a wave of his cane. Then would come his brisk command, "Salute!" And the march, army style, up to the house for more thrilling recitals of Grandpa's war exploits and experiences to which the boy listened with rapt attention, never seeming to tire of them. The gallant old war hero had often told him of his early life; how as a young man living in Massachusetts he had raised a company of minute men and marched off to war. He was familiar too with the stirring tale of the attempted capture of the British stronghold, Fort George, at Castine during the Revolution.

In those days the people of Maine were mostly dependent upon the seacoast around Castine for their supplies of lumber, fish and other commodities, and to cut off this source the English forces determined to establish a fort there. Late in the spring of 1779 they landed an army, drove out the Yankees and built Fort George, named after their king, on high land to give them military command of all the surrounding country.

So the General Court of Massachusetts, then governing Maine, sent an expedition consisting of both land forces and ships to capture the fort. General Wadsworth was second in command, and the famous Paul Revere was in charge of the artillery. The attempt ended in dire disaster, and was one of the most shameful defeats suffered by the struggling colony, entirely due to the inadequate support of the fleet under the command of Commodore Saltonstall. He was forced to destroy his vessels to prevent capture by the enemy. The militia guided by General Wadsworth was compelled to retreat to the Kennebec through trackless forests. They suffered incredible hardships and lack of food on the way, and were reduced to the necessity of eating dogs, roots, and even dry seaweed.

But there was one adventure that was always a great favorite with the boy. "Grandpa, tell me that story of how you were captured by the British and how you escaped from prison."

"Well, well, me lad, pass me my snuff box," and then with wide-eyed attention the young audience would again hear the oft-told, but ever welcome episode in his grandfather's life that for adventure and sheer excitement has hardly been equalled in the whole history of the Revolutionary War.

Keenly disappointed at the failure to capture the British fort, the General retired to his residence in a secluded spot in Thomaston to plan further campaigns. Most of the troops had been disbanded for the winter leaving him only a guard of six men. His family consisted of his wife, a son of five years, a younger daughter, and a young woman companion for his wife named Miss Fenno. As the country thereabouts was alive with spies and Tory sympathizers, the enemy forces at Castine soon learned of his defenseless position, and in February, 1781, the British commanding officer sent a party of twenty-five men under a Lieutenant Stockton to capture him.



They landed at a point on the coast about four miles eastward from Thomaston where they left their schooner, and arrived at the house in the dead of the night. The ground was covered with deep snow, and the weather was bitterly cold. Quietly they surrounded the house as the Lieutenant gave the orders: "At the first sound, fire a volley and shoot anyone trying to escape." As they approached the rear of the house, they were hailed with the sharp cry, "Halt, who goes there?" from one of the general's sentries, who immediately fled through the door of the kitchen, which was being used for a guard room. His retreat was instantly followed by a volley of musketry into that part of the house.

The wildest confusion followed, bullets whizzed in every direction, and amidst the din of smashing doors and windows could be heard the screams of the young companion, Miss Fenno. Some of the soldiers discharged their guns into the sleeping apartment of the general and his wife, and blew in part of the window. A third party forced their way into the bedrooms, ripping down and slashing the curtains in search of their victim. Thus possession was taken of the whole house except the general's room which was strongly barred. Finding no person with Miss Fenno except Mrs. Wadsworth and the children, the British officer gave the order to cease fire.

Awakened at the first sound of alarm, the General, without dressing, had grabbed a brace of pistols and a musket and fought with such fury and accuracy that he kept his assailants entirely away from his windows and the kitchen door. When he opened fire at them through the front door, they retreated, beaten back by his deadly attack. The rest of the enemy who were unwounded rushed in a body up the stairs and smashed in the entrance to the bedroom. The General bravely resisted them with a bayonet, but the appearance of his underlinen betrayed him in the darkness, and a soldier opened fire, sending



a bullet through his left arm. The General then announced his surrender. But still they continued firing. The wounded warrior said to them, "My brave fellows, why do you fire after I have surrendered?"

One of the English soldiers who was badly wounded exclaimed with an oath, "You've taken my life, and I'll take yours," aiming his gun at the General, but the English officer, coming in at that instant, brushed his gun aside and saved the General's life. Most of the guards of the house and several of the enemy were wounded besides the General; the doors and windows smashed; some of the rooms were on fire, and the floors were covered with blood; but the women and children in some miraculous manner escaped unhurt. The little boy of five slept serenely through the whole affair.

The English Lieutenant remarked to the General, "Sir, you have defended yourself bravely—done altogether too much damage for one man."

They helped him to dress except for his coat which the wounded arm made it impossible to wear. His wife and Miss Fenno wanted to dress his wound, but this was not permitted. A blanket was thrown over his shoulder, and a handkerchief then tied tightly around his arm to check the flow of blood. And he was brutally hurried out of the house without learning the fate of his family, or whether his children were safe or not.

Next day he was landed at Castine and the shores were thronged with spectators, Britons and Tories, anxious to see the rebel who had caused so much trouble. Through hostile crowds he was marched under guard to the fort. However the British commander, General Campbell, expressed great admiration for the heroic defense the General had made against such heavy odds, and saw to it that he was cared for, his arm properly dressed by a surgeon, and that he received the proper respect due him. He was placed in an iron barred room within

the fort and strongly guarded. The walls of the fort were twenty-feet high, surrounded by a ditch with sentinels placed upon the walls and outside gates of the fort.

Although Thomaston was only a few miles away, it was nearly two weeks before the General heard from his wife, owing to the unsettled conditions of the country, and his great anxiety as to the welfare of his children was relieved. He had hoped to be exchanged after a few month's imprisonment, and had received permission for his wife to visit him. She arrived for a ten day's stay accompanied by her companion, Miss Fenno. The latter secretly learned from one of the British officers who was attracted to her that Wadsworth was not to be exchanged, but sent to some distant place for the remainder of the war. She kept this news quiet until her departure when she managed to whisper to the General with a most significant look, "General Wadsworth, take care of yourself."

His suspicions were confirmed when he heard from one of his attending servants that he was a rebel of too much consequence to be freed, and was to be sent to England instead. Then he decided to make his escape in spite of the strict precautions taken to guard him. Shortly thereafter a Major Burton who had served with him in former campaigns was taken prisoner, and by good fortune was confined in the same room.

They determined to make an effort to escape or perish, so they settled upon a plan to cut an opening in a corner of the wood ceiling of their cell, crawl through, then creep along one of the joists over the officers' room adjoining, and lower themselves to the outside yard with blankets. Should they be discovered, they would try to avoid detection by acting like officers intoxicated, a sight with which the guards were very familiar. The only tool they had was a penknife, but that was too slow, and they were afraid the marks would betray them.



General Wadsworth then decided to make a confidant of one of the servants with the result that in a few days he was greeted with the cheerful words from the attendant, "My wife thought you would like a pie, and knowing you come from Duxbury she baked you a nice cranberry one. Be careful of this when you eat it." It concealed a gimlet!

At every opportunity the imprisoned men took turns boring holes in the heavy pineboard, and carefully filled the holes with bread crumb paste. In three weeks the board was riddled with just a few strips at the corner holding the piece in place. They had overheard a sentry say that the ship had been sighted, and in three days they would be on their way to England. There was no time to lose.

Then came the kind of a storm they were hoping for, a veritable tempest, and the best kind of a night to make an escape. At its height, the two men pulled the board from the ceiling and climbed into the loft above. Silently they slipped along the narrow joists until they reached the trap door, and with the aid of blankets lowered themselves to the floor below. Aided by the noise of the storm, that was so furious that even some of the sentries took shelter, they cautiously made their way to the barracks. Outside they separated, both agreeing, if all went well, to meet at an old shack that stood at the north side of the fort outside the walls.

The General found the walls too steep to scale, and felt around in the darkness for an oblique path that the soldiers used to get to the top. At that moment he heard the cry, "Relief turn out," and flattened himself in the mud to escape detection. After the guard moved on, he made his way to the top of the wall, fastened his blanket on the iron picket and dropped to safety outside into the ditch. Hastily making his way to the shack he waited for Burton.

As a signal they had arranged that the first to arrive should

whistle "Yankee Doodle" to be sure of identification. Hardly had the General finished the first strain of the tune when the Major came running out of the darkness, and both made their way through familiar country to the river.

Within an hour or so, the British and the whole town knew of their escape. Guns and bugle calls sounded the alarm, and a large force of marines was sent out to scour the river and nearby country, in all directions.

"Ah! but we fooled 'em, we fooled 'em," my boy. By sunrise we were eight or nine miles from the fort, and by good fortune found an old bateau with oars hidden under a tree. This we dragged to the river, crossed over the Penobscot, and soon arrived at a friendly farm house where we got a couple of horses and made haste for home. Your old grandmother was surprised to see me walk in." The General chuckled at his own recollection of the affair and sank back in his easy chair.

The young boy was so enthralled with his grandfather's story that he had hardly noticed the long silence that followed as the old General had fallen asleep. Quietly the youngster tiptoed his way into a little favorite spot in the garden, and was soon lost in his own dreams and flights of poetical fancy that were one day to make him far more famous than the gallant old soldier. What was his name? Well, I'm sure by this time you must have guessed it — Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, whose poems are loved by every nation throughout the world.



---

## The Capture of the Caleb Cushing

---

OF all the majestic scenic views that Maine has to offer to the visitor—and there are many—the one that seems to excite the most admiration and lingers longest in his memory is, I'm sure, our wonderful harbor. We know it has always been regarded with longing envy by our good neighbors to the north of us, and what would England, in these parlous times, not give for such a harbor that could easily, I imagine, shelter the best part of her grand fleet. Portlanders are rightly proud of it and truly love it, but love is strangely fickle at times. Alas! as the poet says, that which we love the most we oftentimes neglect. And local history records, too, how often we desert that very love at almost the first intimation of danger of attack from some unknown enemy.

But, then, the good citizens—at least those who know their history—have never forgotten perhaps the murderous effects of shellfire when Captain Mowatt's British squadron devastated two-thirds of the city back in 1775. And, too, during the entire war of 1812 the whole of Casco Bay was kept in a constant state of agitation by the alarming reports of hostile ships off the islands. Those families who could afford to, fled to Blackstrap and surrounding country for safety. The banks moved all their coin by ox-team to Parson Marrett's house in Standish where it was stored in the cellar. The very house and locks that guarded the treasure can still be seen by the curious. One canny merchant carted his prized stock of fine London rum

to the wilds of Saccarrappa, now Westbrook, where it was auctioned off at fancy prices.

The false alarms and scares caused by the imagined attack of the Spanish Admiral Cervera's battleships during the Spanish-American War, and German submarines during the World War, are still within living memory. And yet, so I am reliably informed, there is not a truly modern piece of armament in the whole length of Casco Bay to protect that which we love and on which most of the wealth of Portland has been founded. So we can sympathize and well understand the state of excitement and consternation in our city during the Civil War when it became known that in the still of the night, June 26, 1863, a rebel privateer had actually entered the harbor under the shadow of the forts—under our very nose, so to speak—and captured a revenue cutter and made off to sea with it.

For sheer audacity and dramatic interest it was a feat not surpassed in the whole history of the War of the Rebellion. It was a skillfully planned and daring enterprise, and but for the fact that there happened to be a bright moon early in the night, and an accidental party at the Ottawa house on Cushings Island which kept the small ferry moving in the harbor, thus delaying the plans of the raiders, two gunboats and a considerable part of the dock section of the city would have surely been destroyed by fire.

All local shipping had been warned to be on the lookout for the rebel raider, the *Tacony*, under the command of Lieutenant Read, a dashing young naval officer of the Confederacy who had done much damage to Northern commerce, and who was reported to be in the vicinity. A reward of \$10,000 had been offered by the Boston Underwriters for her capture, but like a veritable ghost ship she eluded all pursurers.

So famous was this tall, handsome young Lieutenant of



twenty-three, that the stories of his many exploits had become almost legendary. He had actually captured most of his prizes with a Quaker gun — a dummy made from a ship's mast mounted on a gun carriage. However, he narrowly escaped capture when lying becalmed about forty-five miles from Portland harbor. His lookout reported a steamer ahead. After scanning her through the glasses, the young commander pronounced her a Yankee gunboat.

"Well, boys," he said, "I guess our frolics are about over, but we must try and fool em." All hands were ordered below with the exception of a few. Besides their sidearms, they had one six pound howitzer which was hurriedly stored below deck. They certainly were in no condition to fight a gunboat.

Soon they were hailed by the Yankee barque, "Ahoy, where bound?" to which Lieutenant Read coolly replied, "Mary Jane from La Grande bound to Portland, sah."

The Captain of the gunboat then informed him that there was a rebel privateer cruising along the coast, and that they had better keep a sharp lookout. The rebel commander thanked him with a chuckle, and the steamer moved off southward. It was a narrow escape.

"Boys, we had a close call, but we're still on deck. These here Yanks are making it too hot for us in this latitude. We must change our program. Ah propose to capture the first fast schooner we can get, and run her into Portland. There is a revenue cutter in the harbor, and we may be able to cut her out. They're building two gunboats, we can destroy them and some shipping and get away."

Shortly after, a fishing vessel came in sight. It was the *Archer* out of Southport just coming in from the Banks. Its crew was about to sit down to a dinner of fish chowder when they were hailed by the *Tacony*. They did not suspect for a moment she was the dreaded rebel ship. After the surrender, the com-

bined crews sat down and finished the chowder, perhaps the introduction of a Down East fish chowder to the Southerners.

At dark the armaments and equipment were transferred from the privateer to the newly captured ship and the rebel boat then sunk. The next day the raiders boldly sailed the fishing vessel into the harbor past the forts, and cast anchor in full view of the waterfront. During the remainder of the daylight, the intrepid young lieutenant studied the harbor as he lounged in an apparently careless attitude scanning with his sharp eyes the waterfront and the shipping, turning over in his mind his plan of campaign. The supreme moment had come!

Here he was in an enemy port, unsuspected. The town he had dreamed of destroying lay before him. His men were below making oakum balls saturated with turpentine to set fire to the gunboats. At first he considered capturing the New York boat, *Chesapeake*, but had no engineer capable of handling the engines, so he was forced to abandon that idea. And then when night came, the early moon was so bright and the weather so calm, that he doubted if a boat could approach the gunboats without detection. So he devoted all his thoughts to the capture of the revenue cutter, the *Caleb Cushing*. It was nearly midnight, and as the little ferry carrying the last of the guests home from the party at the Ottawa House passed close by, the gay infectious sound of feminine laughter floated across the water to him.

It had been a long time since the young naval officer had heard the soft sound of a woman's voice, but this was no time for sentiment. Quickly—almost gruffly, he passed the word along for action. Each man divested himself of his shoes, and the two boats were lowered as silently as possible. Captain Read was in charge of one, and the mate in the other, and with muffled oarlocks started for the revenue ship, leaving three men in charge of the *Archer*, and instructions to follow.



They made for the stern of the cutter as the watch was forward, and got in quite close before they were hailed. The lookout on the cutter challenged a second time and getting no reply, and not liking the look of things, he rushed down into the cabin and aroused the officer in charge, a Lieutenant Davenport. He, heavy with sleep, and only partly dressed, hurried on deck to find himself confronted by four men with pistols and the stern warning, "Make a sound, and you are a dead man. You are the prisoner of the Confederate States of America."

As the crew were asleep in their hammocks, it was the work of but a few moments to put them in handcuffs and gag them. "Now, boys," said the rebel commander, not unkindly, "what we want is the cutter, not you Yanks. You all behave yourselves, and we'll put you off on some island as we go out of the harbor. You make trouble, you'll be shot and thrown overboard."

So quietly and efficiently had the job been done that not a sound had reached across to the forts or to the docks or shipping. They hurriedly prepared to sail, but had considerable difficulty with the anchor. The sails got jammed, too, causing much loss of precious time, and when they thought that all was ready to get away, she would not move. They were aground, with not a breath of wind and a flood tide setting in.

Just imagine the situation! twenty-one Confederate seamen in a captured Yankee cutter in a Yankee port well after midnight, and stuck fast in the mud. Something had to be done and done quickly. So they ran a line to an anchored barque ahead and managed to haul her out into deep water. Quickly manning the two small boats, they towed the ship out into the harbor against the tide, and just at daylight they lay off Fort Preble. A light north-west breeze sprung up, the boats were called in, and a hasty search was made for ammunition.

To their utter dismay, they found plenty of powder but only one shell, a 32 pounder which was found in the potato locker.

At 7:30 a. m. an official lookout at the observatory noticed a ship which looked very much like the *Caleb Cushing*, which he thought to be safe in the harbor, standing out to sea. And an hour later old Jed Jewett, the collector of the customs, was enjoying his breakfast when an excited messenger blurted out that the cutter had put to sea in the night and could be seen from the observatory making to eastward.

The news spread like wildfire, and caused intense excitement. Everyone suspected the rebel raiders, but that they could have entered the harbor and taken the ship without detection seemed beyond the bounds of all possibility. By this time word had gone out that an expedition was being formed to recapture her, and every man jack rolled up his sleeves and started for the dock armed with everything from ancient blunderbusses to cutlasses: fishermen, stevedores, teamsters, shopkeepers, and business men.

By eleven o'clock the steamer *Forest City* under Captain Liscomb with a detachment of infantry from the fort and some armed citizens started off in pursuit followed shortly by the New York boat, *Chesapeake*, with more troops and volunteers even a fighting parson from Park Street Church. By fatal ill luck the breeze had died down, and the *Caleb Cushing* with her rebel crew lay becalmed at a point some fifteen miles from the harbor with the rescue steamers rapidly approaching.

"Oh, for a six knot breeze and a few shots, and we'd show 'em some fun," said the rebel commander as he gave the order to fire their one and only shell. "We'll give 'em a scare anyhow."

When the smoke cleared away it was seen that both steamers had turned broadside as though to turn back. "Load her up again, boys, and give it to 'em." "But we have nothing to load her with, sir," answered the gunner. In the meantime the



*Chesapeake* had slackened speed to allow the *Forest City* to come up with her. Then ensued the following dialogue between the two Captains.

"Ahoy, *Forest City*, what course do you take?"

"We haven't decided," came back the answer.

"Well, can't you attack her on one side while we attack the other?"

"We think," replied the Captain of the *Forest City*, "the best thing is to run her down as she has superior armament."

"Will you take the lead?"

"No," came the reply, "You had better go ahead, we are not prepared."

"All right, we shall steer straight for her, and run into her anyway we can, and you can take what's left."

What would have ultimately happened if they had carried out their plans is hard to conjecture, but suddenly a burst of flame was seen to spring from the deck of the cutter followed by the sight of two boats pulling quickly away from her. Commander Read, realizing that escape was hopeless, had given orders to fire her and take to the boats. Shortly after, a terrific explosion took place as the flames reached the gunpowder magazine, and the *Caleb Cushing* sank beneath the surface. The raiders were soon captured, and marched under a strong guard to Fort Preble amid the ringing of bells and the firing of guns.

Immense throngs of people lined the wharves, the road leading to the fort and every place of vantage. Here and there a derisive shout, "Eh, you Johnny Rebel, there'll soon be a rope around your neck."

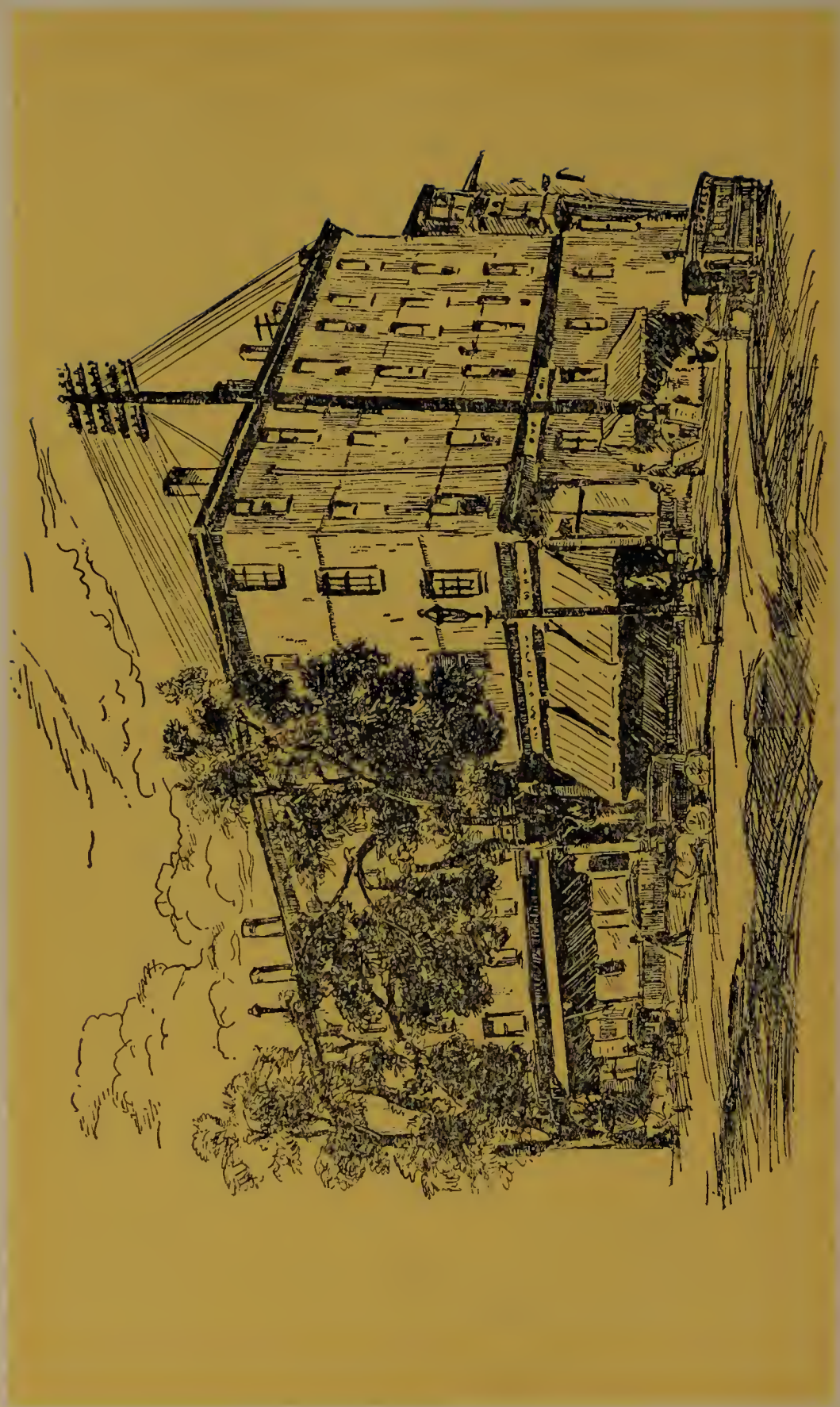
That night a mob clamored at the fort gates demanding the prisoners, but Major Andrews, officer in command, shouted, "They are my prisoners of war. They are gallant men, and I will protect them with guns if necessary."

Eventually they were shipped to Boston, and later exchanged, but I'll wager that the sight of the tall handsome young rebel commander from Georgia, with the soft, southern dialect, caused quite a flutter in the breasts of the Portland belles of '63. Here was a dashing, courageous, humane, young naval officer, only twenty-three years old, with apparently all the attractive attributes of a Rhet Butler stepped direct from the pages of *Gone With the Wind*.

Were it to happen in these prosaic days with the breath of romance of that story still fragrant in our memory, I'm quite sure that our modern gals would re-capture him and see to it that he was safely married off—not to a Scarlet O'Hara, perhaps, but to some sturdy Portland girl, and thus be converted into a respectable law-abiding Down Easter. As a romantic echo of this episode, a sentimental link with the past, we have treasured through all the years the very pennant that once flew from the mast-head of this bold privateer, even the handcuffs that were once the property of this gentleman free-booter, proof evidence enough I think that romance still lives beneath the thin veneer of our so-called cool conservatism. They lie on display, under glass, in the rooms of the Maine Historical Society.



PREBLE: FATHER OF THE AMERICAN NAVY



*The old Preble House, built by Commodore Preble  
as his home, later converted into a hotel*



---

## Preble: Father of the American Navy

---

WHEN we visit our good neighbors across the Canadian border, we are, I think, immediately impressed with the striking similarity in appearance to our own country. Toronto and Montreal for example might well be American cities so alike are they to ours: the language, the money, the methods of doing business are much the same. But if you should spend an extended time there, you would be equally impressed with the extraordinary devotion and loyalty shown to England, even though as a nation they are quite distinct and independent of the Mother Country. Not so much perhaps to England as a nation, as it is to the tradition and pageantry which is the heart of old England. This thin, but so strong, gossamer thread of reverence for the pomp and circumstance of the Empire serves as a lasting yet intangible link between the nations. It is a rich source of inspiration to their youth and adult alike. They may criticize and condemn, in fact they often do, but woe unto the outsider if he should do likewise.

Now all this is foreign to us as a republic. We have no such tradition, nor do we need that particular form of worship, but we do need, now as never before I think, a great ideal fitting to a great nation such as ours. When you read James Truslow Adams' remarkable book *The Epic of America* you see very clearly that for the past hundred years or more we have built up a sort of ideal or legend around the big captains of industry.

They were the actors in our national drama of big business, to be admired and emulated by all. In a series of vivid chapters Mr. Adams tells you of the early foundation of this legend, of the great god Success that grew with the years.

It started with the first Astor and old miserly Stephen Girard, America's first multimillionaires. When they died with their amassed fortunes the magazines and newspapers of the land were filled with eulogies and econiums. They were praised as examples for every young American to follow, and as everyone is born free and equal, with as much right to become a millionaire as they, the mad rush started. Then followed the grouping of the monied interests on the Eastern Seaboard, the discovery of gold in California, the spanning of the continent by the railroads under Harriman and Huntington, the creation of the oil octopus under the Rockefellers, and the formation of the first billion dollar steel trust by the Morgans.

The great god Success and its disciples were rampant in the land and huge fortunes were made and lost at almost the mere turn of a card. These men were not only our leaders in big business, but they dominated our social and daily life until the tragic collapse of 1929, when these very leaders proved to be mere idols with feet of clay.

Now when we examine the English ideal of tradition closely we find that it is not all pomp and circumstance. It is grounded very largely in the idolization of their heroes on land and sea. They make much of their heroes and little of their politicians. Both American and English schoolboys thrill alike to the glorious exploits of the sea-dogs of old England: Sir Francis Drake, Walter Raleigh, Hawkins, and Frobisher, all sturdy adventurers and sailors from the West English counties of Devon, Somerset, Cornwall, and Gloucester.

And it was from these very self-same counties that came many of the early settlers of our own State of Maine. So you



see it is no mere chance nor coincidence that right here from our own soil have sprung Maine men with all the attributes of those sea-dogs of old England, who had the courage to do and dare. Men around whom we can, and should build a tradition, a purely American tradition, that would prove a real fountain of inspiration in these trying times of today.

Now it is an indisputable fact that all English history can show no greater example of patriotism, loyalty, and courage, than our own Preble family of Portland. As an outsider, so to speak, I have been vaguely familiar with the name Preble. There was once a hotel here by that name, also an obscure fort so called, but I am literally amazed to learn of the unparalleled career of Commodore Edward Preble, a veritable sea-dog of Maine if there ever was one.

At a time when most boys of today are struggling with high school he was serving on a privateer. When barely eighteen he captured an armed British frigate, and as commander of the *Constitution* won for the American Navy the respect of the whole world. And, perhaps the most important of all, he left behind him an imperishable Preble tradition which pervades the entire American navy even to this day. A tradition of service that has never left it, founded on democracy within its ranks, and a degree of efficiency of the highest, based on constant drill and fearless action.

Now this great man was Portland born, Portland raised, and died in Portland a world-famous hero, a great citizen, and truly the Father of the American Navy. Born in 1761 in Falmouth, which is now Portland, he was exceedingly fortunate in birth and environment, as his father, Jedediah Preble, had been a doughty brigadier general in the wars under Pepperell.

The old man was determined to find out early if his young sons Edward and Henry had a dash of the right stuff in them. So when a foreign ship arrived in port with a fez-turbanned

Turk aboard, he stuffed the youngsters with stories of how these terrible men kidnapped and ate little children. Then he bribed the son of Mahomet to appear gibbering and uttering strange oaths in the door way one night when the boys were alone at the fireside. Young Henry promptly dived under the bed at the first sight of the ogre, but our future Commodore sprang at the invader like a young lion and routed the barbarian with a firebrand. He showed his mettle and fibre later when in school. He had badly battered a schoolmate in a fight and the schoolmaster raised his cane as though to strike him, but young Edward looked at his assailant so coolly and fearlessly that the latter, pale with fury, instantly calmed down with the muttered comment that the lad would make a good general.

But the boy's leaning was toward the sea and at the age of sixteen, while working on his father's farm, where Capisic street is now, he dropped his hoe with the remark, "I've done with farming," and started in a straight line for the docks. The same day he embarked on a privateer as a sailor. He was gone a year and liked it, and his father obtained a midshipman's warrant for him. He served on the American brig *Protector* and participated in the destruction of the British warship *Admiral Duff*. While on another cruise he was captured and confined on a prison ship where he developed a sickness from which he never really recovered.

As a lad of eighteen he lived his full hour of crowded glory, while serving as a midshipman on the American ship *Winthrop* under Captain Little. He had heard that there was a British brig lying at anchor under the guns of the English fort on the Penobscot and got permission from his captain to capture her if possible. It was planned to steal upon her at night and carry her by boarding, and when all was ready Preble with forty men wearing white shirts over their jackets to distinguish friend



from foe massed on deck for the attack. As the *Winthrop* drew alongside the British vessel in the darkness an English officer mistaking it for one of their own ships shouted "Run aboard."

"I *am* coming aboard," coolly answered Preble as he clambered on. Just then the American ship caught a puff of wind and drifted off, leaving Preble with only fourteen men on the enemy's deck.

"Shall I send more men?" called out his captain.

"No, I have too many already," came the reply. In short time he overpowered the British crew and sailed his prize out of the harbor under the combined fire of the fort guns without the loss of a man.

His reputation for courage and coolness in danger soon spread. They spoke of him as that hatchet-faced, young-old man from Maine with ice-water in his veins, as hard as a teak log. He was hard, a martinet for discipline, but scrupulously fair and just to his men. A victim of violent temper at times, perhaps, but so generous that his crew idolized him.

In the days before the War of 1812, the American Navy had made little stir in the world. It was regarded with contempt by other nations, especially so by the black pirates of the Mediterranean. These pirates from the ports of Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli had captured many of our merchant ships and made slaves of the officers and crews. Incredible and humiliating as it may seem today, the American government, for lack of an adequate navy, had to pay tribute to these black pirates to the amount of hundreds of thousands of dollars.

But in 1803, we determined to put a stop to it and a powerful squadron was sent to attack their ports on the Barbary Coast. So at the age of forty Commodore Preble, aggravated with a sickness he couldn't seem to overcome, hoisted his pennant at the masthead of the historic *Constitution*, then the heaviest frigate we had. Up to this time, the *Constellation* was

the most famous ship in the navy, but after Preble's great and successful cruise to the Barbary Coast, the *Constitution* became the darling ship of the nation. In all her battles she never lost her commanding officer, nor did any great slaughter ever take place on her decks. She was never aground nor ever dismasted. And in Preble she had a commander worthy of her for he was unquestionably one of the greatest sea officers this country ever produced.

Under his guidance and leadership there developed a group of young sea-dogs, all under the age of twenty-five, who for seamanship, valor, and initiative, have never been surpassed, not only in this country, but in any country: Stephen Decatur who destroyed the frigate Philadelphia in the harbor of Tripoli under the massed guns of the pirates, which deed earned from Lord Nelson the praise of being the most bold and daring act of the age; Richard Somers who died a hero's death at 24; Richard Bainbridge who later commanded the *Constitution* in 1812; Perry who defeated the British on Lake Erie with the immortal declaration, "We have met the enemy and they are ours;" James Lawrence of "Don't give up the ship" fame; Thomas McDonough; Isaac Hull and others. They took pride in being known as Preble men, and in the war of 1812, they all won individual victories.

Commodore Preble and his squadron wiped out the pirate menace for ever and in the words of the then Pope of Rome, "had done more for Christendom in a short space of time than the most powerful nations of Christianity had done for ages." His death came in 1807 at the youthful age of forty-six and his last words to his brother Enoch were, "Give me your hand Enoch, I am going. Give me your hand." And thus died the man Preble, but not the Preble spirit which kindled a glow of inspiration in the naval service that has never been extinguished. When he entered the service in the days of the



Revolution the American Navy was negligible, a chaotic, disorganized affair, politically controlled. He left it unified and efficient, and it was this very Preble spirit that enabled the almost unknown and despised American navy to match the mighty fleet of the British in the War of 1812, and come off victorious. Out of eighteen naval engagements between them the Americans won no less than fifteen.

No, we cannot hope to rival the age-old splendors of England's cathederal sancturaries and ancient traditions. We don't need to. Around the lives of such men as Commodore Preble can be built ideals and tradition enough worthy of any people, any nation. Let us cultivate them.



*The Observatory as it appeared on the day of the  
Princ of Wales' visit in 1860*



---

## Dark Days of '61

---

ON Memorial Day the whole country and every American on foreign land honors the sacred memory of our soldier dead, by customary decoration of the graves of our heroes lost in battle, from the Revolutionary days to the white-crossed cemetery of Chateau Thierry in France. It seems strange to think of American soldiers, many of them just green, raw youths, from the corn country of Kansas and the vast plains of the West, silently asleep on foreign soil; youngsters, who in life, in many instances, had hardly travelled a short mile beyond the confines of their small farm homes.

Yet we can hardly say they lie on foreign soil, for wherever they rest is consecrated American earth. Don't you recall that treasured bit of verse by Rupert Brooke, *The Soldier*, which expresses so eloquently this very thought? Rupert Brooke, the young English poet as handsome as a Greek god, killed in the ugly mess which we call the Great War. He must have had a premonition of death when he wrote:

“ If I should die, think only this of me;  
That there's some corner of a foreign field  
That is forever England. There shall be  
In that rich earth, a richer dust concealed:  
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,  
Gave once her flowers to love, her ways to roam,  
A body of England's, breathing English air,  
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.”

And, so it is too, with the gallant young English commander of the Enterprise-Boxer battle of 1812, whose body lies alongside his equally gallant and youthful adversary in the quiet tomb in the old Eastern Cemetery. A little fragment of old England in the heart of New England.

But time inexorably marches on and the fast thinning ranks of the veterans of the Civil War will soon be but a memory, a memory of one of the cruellest and bloodiest wars in all history, in which family often fought family, brother fought brother, before the final peace came. Peace, alas! there is no peace, for even today, seventy-seven years afterward. Since the advent of that internationally famous novel, *Gone with the Wind*, we have been inundated with Civil War stories, in which the struggle on both sides wages as fiercely and as furiously as ever. Our very ears are dinned with the shouts of battle cries, and the acrid smell of shell-fire grips our nostrils as the legions of the North still tramp to the martial music of the *Battle Hymn of the Republic*, and Johnny Reb to the familiar strains of *Dixie*.

And here is an interesting and curious paradox for you. There never was a true Dixieland in the South and the words and tune were actually written by a Northerner. It originated in this way. Back in the very early days of Manhattan Island, a Dutch planter named Johannes Dixon came there to settle. He had purchased a number of stalwart blacks to work on his plantation. A very humane master, he gave them plenty of food to eat and did not work them too hard. They were very happy until hard times came when the Dutch planter was forced to dispose of them and they were scattered to less happy surroundings. As is their wont the darkies always sing of their joys and sorrows in his own quaint folksongs and wherever they worked afterward they sang of the good times they had with old Dixie, as they called the Dutchman. Like the ballads



of old the folksong was handed down in legend form to their descendants. One day, Emmett, the black-faced minstrel famous in pre-Civil War times, heard the colored cotton pickers singing the plaintive doggerel, "Away, look away, ah wish ah was with Dixie, with Dixie in Dixieland." He adapted it in a minstrel song and wrote the tune and words, "I wish I was in Dixie," sang it, and made it immensely popular throughout the country. Thus the paradox. The Southern armies marching to a Northern air.

Maine's great contribution and services in the World War are well within living memory, but I venture to say that little is known and remembered today of Maine's glorious part in the Civil War. How many of us know, for example, that had it not been for the self-sacrificing valor and heroism of a Maine infantry regiment, the Battle of Gettysburg would have been lost, and, in all probability, the war itself, to the Northern cause?

That during the Civil War Maine furnished the army and navy with more men proportionally than did any other state?

That the First Maine Cavalry sustained the heaviest loss killed in action of any cavalry regiment in the entire army, and that the First Maine Heavy Artillery had more killed and mortally wounded than any other regiment in the Northern army?

That Maine men were on every battlefield since the commencement of the war and never lost a flag, but captured many of the enemy's?

Wars and battles are considered great in proportion to the loss of life resulting from them. Bloodless battles excite no interest. The Battle of Gettysburg was the greatest of the war, and the loss of the Federal Army alone is said to have exceeded that of the French at Waterloo.

The State of Maine sent 70,000 men as her contribution to

the war, comprising ten infantry regiments, a company of sharpshooters, one cavalry regiment and three batteries of artillery, and her dead was nearly 10,000 out of a state population of 628,000. No section of the country was more prompt and energetic in rallying to the colors than Maine. In twenty-four hours from the time the despatches from Washington were bulletined, whole companies had reported to their officers. Regiments were in readiness for the roll-call and impatiently awaited orders to enter service. One-fourth of the troops actually engaged in the first battle of Bull Run were sons of the Pine Tree State. I cannot tell you of all the glorious exploits of these regiments, but the following incidents alone are more than enough, I am sure to enshrine the memory of these men in our hearts for ever.

Every schoolboy has thrilled at Tennyson's story of the stirring charge of the Light Brigade at Balaklava in 1854, and this heroic episode was actually reenacted ten years later at the battle of Petersburg in the Civil War. The First Heavy Maine Artillery led the attack with a mad charge. It was a brief rush, shorter than Balaklava, and all was over in less than fifteen minutes. In that short time 115 had been killed and over 500 wounded, the heaviest loss of any regiment in the entire army.

The Seventeenth Maine Infantry under Colonel West was recruited from near home, Cumberland, York, Oxford and Androscoggin counties and greatly distinguished itself in the battles of Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville, sustaining very heavy losses.

The Twelfth Maine Infantry was styled the lawyers' regiment. Colonel Shepley the officer commanding was the U. S. District Attorney, and eighteen of the officers were either lawyers or law students.

The Thirteenth Regiment was known even in the South as



the prohibition regiment as it was raised and commanded by Col. Neal Dow. It was sent to Louisiana, and the Colonel and four companies went by ship which was caught in a severe storm off Hatteras, and might have been lost but for the assistance rendered by some of the soldiers who were sailors before they enlisted.

A true touch of romance and pathos attaches itself to the Maine Sixteenth, as a contemporary clipping from a Southern newspaper reads: "Yesterday a rather prepossessing lass was discovered among the prisoners on Belle Isle. She gave her name as Mary Johnson, belonging to the Sixteenth Regiment and her excuse for adopting her soldier toggery was that she was following her lover to shield him and protect him when in danger. He had been killed and now she wanted to go home."

Bangor claimed the proud honor of being the first city in the Union to raise a company of volunteers before the draft regulations came into full force and it was the Third Infantry, made up mostly of hardy lumbermen from the Kennebec, who originated the famous stove pipe artillery. They mounted a piece of stove pipe on carriage wheels and hauled it in full sight of the enemy, and chortled with glee while the rebels wasted their shells.

The year of 1860 was a presidential election year and as the slogan, "As Maine goes, so goes the Nation," meant something in those days, great stress was laid on the Maine election. Throughout August and September, squads of men and boys were enrolling and drilling on the open spaces of Munjoy Hill during the daytime, while torchlight and military processions thrilled the citizens at night.

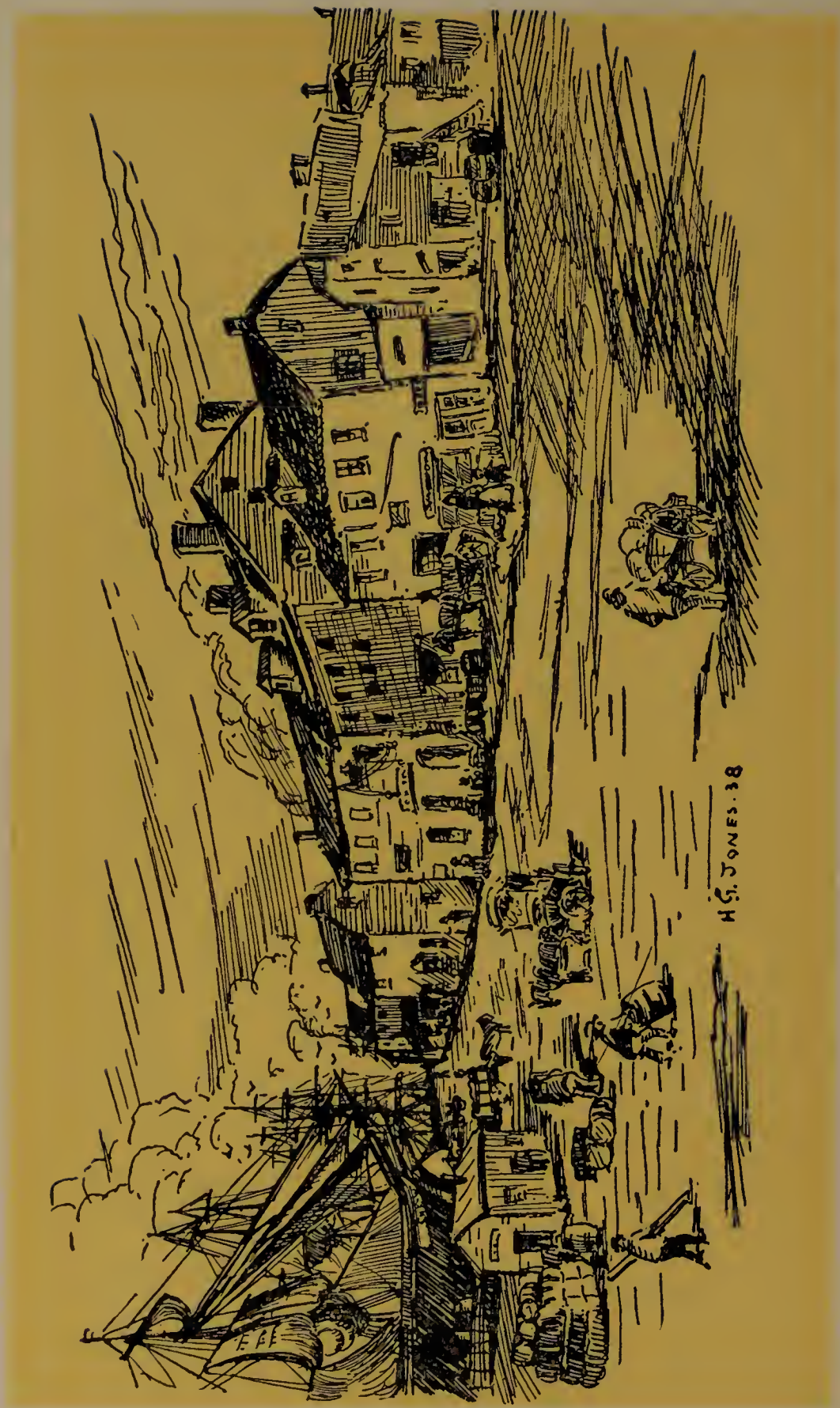
Word had come to the populace that South Carolina had seceded, but that meant little at the time. "What does that mean?" was asked. In fact so little of it was thought that people were singing, "Little Chebeague is going to secede," as

if it was the biggest joke in the world. Regiments were arriving in the city from all parts of the State and were quartered in the city hall over night to entrain for Boston in the morning.

In 1862, shattered remnants of the Seventh Regiment which had left Augusta in 1861 over 800 strong, returned to Portland to rest up and recruit. In the fourteen months previous it had participated in ten engagements, and had borne the brunt of the famous battle of Williamsburg. Ten days after the affair, General McClellan rode up to the regiment, saying, "Soldiers, I have come to thank you for your good conduct and gallantry. On that little plain you saved our army from a disgraceful defeat. Bear on your colors 'Williamsburg' in token of your bravery as the highest honor that I can confer on you."



## SHIPDAYS AND SHIPWAYS



*Fore Street in the early days*



---

## Shipdays and Shipways

---

*Old horse! old horse! what brought you here?  
From Saccarrappa to Portland Pier  
I've carted stone this many a year;  
'Til killed by blows and sore abuse,  
They salted me down for sailors' use.  
The sailors they do me despise,  
They turn me over and damn my eyes  
Cut off my meat and scrape my bones,  
And pitch me over to Davy Jones.*

SURELY there are some Portlanders today in whom the above rhyme will rekindle fireside memories of great-grandfather's days. When the above verse appeared in the early 1800's, ascribed to Thomas Shaw, the ballad-singer of Standish, little did the modest author realize that ere long every shell-backed sailor would be quoting and chanting it in every sizable port throughout the Seven Seas of the globe. It became the most famous chantey of the age, and wherever English was spoken, Portland Pier became celebrated in song around the world, from Calcutta to Capetown, from Hong-Kong to Honolulu, and from Limehouse to Cape Horn.

After it was immortalized in Dana's great sea-classic, *Two Years Before the Mast*, it really became a synonym of Portland, a Portland of long ago, when it was one of the most interesting and lively seaports in the whole world, when ships from every

port lined its wharves. Alas! there is little indeed in the comparative melancholy silence of its harbor today to suggest its glories of yesteryear, when its waters and city waterfront were literally alive with exciting bustle and activity; of a time when it was crowded with a forest of masts: brigs, barques, barkentines, East Indiamen, majestic clippers, and whalers. Its favorable location brought the town considerable trade early in its history, chiefly coastwise in nature, with cargoes of cordwood, lumber, and fish for southern ports, and much of Portland's growth was due to its splendid harbor.

The first real shipping business of any importance that came to early Portland was in the supply of masts for the British Royal Navy. It also brought large numbers of foreign ships to the harbor. A definite link to a romantic past is the little clump of tall, tapering, white pines, still retaining the interesting and significant King's Mark, to be seen on the top of the hill between Naples and Bridgton. These masts were brought down Fore and Presumscot Rivers and, together with spars, were prepared and loaded at Clark's Point.

While Portland's greatest glory was in the sailing rather than the building of ships, there was already some activity in shipbuilding as early as 1728. By 1744 the little town of Falmouth could boast a fleet and a fairly well established trade with the West Indies. A French nobleman, the Duc de la Rochefoucault, on his way to Canada in 1795, counted seventy ships of various tonnage, all belonging to the townspeople. Small sloops would take out lumber and fish in exchange for rum, sugar, and molasses, and eventually we became famous for our West Indies trade, just as Salem in Massachusetts was noted for its East India trade, and New Bedford for its great whaling industry.

The shipping business must have been free and easy in those days, as it was not until 1758 that a regular customs of-



ficer was appointed for the direction of port affairs. A Francis Waldo was made inspector, and as there was no palatial customs house such as we have today, he had to conduct his business in a modest dwelling located at Middle and India Street, then known as King Street. The first customs house did not come into being until 1807, and by this time Portland was an enterprising and prosperous little town with 4500 inhabitants, and 550 dwelling houses. The business activities centered principally on Fore Street, and about India Street; while the residences were on Congress and Middle Streets. As evidence of its progress, the town had just ordered its first fire engine built in London. It caused considerable wonderment, emblazoned as it was in vivid red colors, and, according to the expression of a local wit, it looked like a huge boiled red lobster. But here was really the most amusing part of the affair. The good citizens had invested in the expense of sixty-five fire buckets at three dollars each, before they discovered, many years later, that it was a suction engine.

And then in 1807, dire and tragic disaster struck the little striving community like a blight. The promulgation of the Jefferson Embargo Act destroyed its shipping business almost over night. The port of Portland was caught between two fires, England and France, and thus suffered cruelly. The waterfront was deserted while ships rotted at their anchors and hundreds of the citizens in the town lined up each day in old Market Square, now Monument Square, to be fed from public soup kitchens.

With the War of 1812 came recovery, as it provided a new stimulus for commerce and industry, plus the lucrative trade of privateering. The prosperity of the port grew rapidly as we read that in 1826, the total tonnage of our vessels entering Havana, Cuba alone was 11,169, a larger amount than from either Boston or New York. Yes, they were full and lively

days for the port of Portland, and a little Portland-born lad who haunted the waterfront has written in verse an imperishable and enchanting picture of those days of 1820 when the West Indian trade was at its height:

“I remember the black wharves and the slips,  
And the sea-tides tossing free;  
And Spanish sailors, with bearded lips,  
And the beauty and mystery of the ships.”

This of course is Longfellow singing for us the story of the picturesque pageantry of old Fore Street when it was not only the principal business center of the city, but the actual waterfront. Commercial Street, which is all made land, had not then been built, and the waves of the harbor dashed along Fore Street shore. What a story this old section of Portland in the 1820's could tell, for in its history it has witnessed all phases of life. It has been the home of the aristocrat and the home of the poet, the market place of the city and its waterfront, where some of the most exciting events in the history of our city have taken place. It saw its origin as a lowly cow-path long before the days of the Revolution and was not regularly laid out as a street until 1724. It reached its pinnacle of fame during the great era of the graceful square-riggers, which thrust their pointed booms far over the pavement. Its crooked contours were lined with busy counting offices, shipping cargoes to all parts of the earth; ship-chandlers' stores with their varied stock of great cables, anchors, chronometers, and other navigating instruments; two story buildings and sail-lofts with banner signs flapping from their upper windows, and here and there the glowing forges of the ship smithies.

The wharves resounded with the melodious song of negro stevedores hoisting heavy hogsheads from the ship holds by main strength, as there were no steam winches then. The



rumble of long heavy trucks loaded with timber mingled with the cracking of whips and the loud cries of the teamsters. Liquor, 'tis said, was lavishly supplied to the laboring men, which usually resulted in a turbulent uproar and pandemonium. Certainly there could have been no idlers in those days, and evidently he who did not work could not eat.

In the early days of the last century, the streets of the town, as well as the waterfront, were invariably clogged with long strings of ox-teams hauling heavy loads to Portland Pier to be shipped to the West Indies. Lumber from Saccarappa, now Westbrook, and from the saw mills on the Saco River; shooks from Fryeburg, Hiram, and Baldwin, and barrel staves from Standish. Sometimes they stretched for more than a mile out on the old Stroudwater Road, halting for refreshment at the notorious Horse Tavern, somewhere in the vicinity of Union Station, which was a favorite rendezvous for these noisy teamsters. The peaceful early morning slumbers of the irate citizens would be rudely disturbed by the raucous cries of the drivers, goading their plodding beasts, and their loud exclamations, "Gee, Star," and "Whoa hisk," could be heard for long distances, leaving the suffering populace to infer that the oxen were exceedingly deaf.

The two main avenues of approach to the town then were the Stroudwater Road, continuing over Bramhall Hill; and over Deering's Bridge, up Green Street, now called Forest Avenue. Vermonters and farmers from the Coos country dressed in vivid blue woolen smocks drove red pungs loaded with hogs, butter, and cheese. Portland Street was not then open. It was their usual custom, after delivering their loads, to congregate at Hucksters' Row, the busy marketplace between Oak and Free on the west side of Congress Street. Things were cheaper there and trade was brisk at all times.

Doubtless, these very oxen found their ignominious ending

in the tough rations served in forecastles of the old time sailing ships of that period. "Horse beef," or "old horse," the sailors derisively nicknamed it, although it was denied officially that horse meat was ever really served as food. Nevertheless, the early sailors were quite convinced that worn out horses were slaughtered for their meal table:

"And if you don't believe my story true  
In the harness cask you'll find my shoe."

There is an old adage that a strong people have always heard the call of the sea, and no country really became great until she went to sea. Portland had always been a seafaring town from its infancy, and most of its early citizens were brought up to a seafaring life. From the sea came much of Portland's early wealth, and the few, only too few, stately mansions that still remain to us are graceful reminders of a great era that is now but a memory. Maine ships and Maine skippers were famous all the world over, not only for their sailing qualities, but for the smart, spic and span appearance of their vessels, the fierce discipline and the rigid gospel of "spit and polish and holystones."

Their captains were particularly superior in the art of crowding canvas in the stiffest of breezes, which proved a prime factor in their unparalleled success. They were manned by deep-water "shellbacks" and officered at times by notorious, hard-boiled bucko mates, who were liberal users of knuckle-dusters and belaying pins, and if occasion called for it, firearms. More than one Maine skipper was listed as inhuman in that curiously human document *The Red Record*, published in the nineties by the National Seamen's Union of San Francisco. In consequence, they found it difficult sometimes to obtain crews who would ship with them.



There is no doubt that the sea is a hard taskmaster, and it needed a hardness to handle a ship successfully in a hurricane, or steer one through a Cape Horn "snorter." Certainly life in a wind-jammer was no place for a weakling; only the very toughest could hope to survive. But all this had its own reward, for no yacht was more neat, none better kept than a typical Yankee ship, as the following chantey demonstrates:

"A Yankee ship came down the river,  
Blow, boys, blow!  
Her masts and spars they shone like silver,  
Blow, my bully boys, blow!"

It was the gold rush of 1849, that frenzied, mad migration of human beings to California via Cape Horn, as much as anything, that produced the famous clipper ship, a ship that could outsail anything afloat, and whose glory and romance will remain in our memory as long as the love of the sea lasts. During the year 1853, Maine built no less than twenty-eight of these beautiful clippers, among the most famous being *Snow Squall* and *Black Squall* built at the Butler yards in Cape Elizabeth.

*Snow Squall*, commanded by Captain Ira Bursley made sailing history when she led the big clipper, Donald McKay's *Romance of the Seas*, in a famous race on the China tea route. The hurry and scurry for gold, too, gave the Yankee skipper a double opportunity. After delivering a human cargo to the newly discovered El Dorado, he would leave post-haste for China, and load tea for the London and New York market. As was to be expected, not a few of the Portland citizens caught the gold fever, and one enthusiastic group organized the Portland and California Mining Company. Long Wharf was crowded to witness the departure of these Argonauts in the brig *Ruth* in search for fame and fortune. By all accounts, they found plenty of the former, but too little of the latter.

It is easy to imagine that beneath the toughened exterior of a Yankee skipper of those days one would find a sentimental vein of deep affection for their clipper ships, those frail but graceful greyhounds of the sea, but unfortunately, in too many instances, these ships possessed an unforgivable and irreconcilable disadvantage. They rarely paid dividends! They were expensive to operate and a luxury, and no hard-headed Yankee shipowner could long forgive that. Primarily they were built for speed with small regard for cargo capacity. For this reason they were soon to give way to a new and more sturdily built ship, the famous "Down Easter," built chiefly of Maine lumber in Maine shipyards, and captained invariably by Maine men. These were designed especially for the California grain trade during the spectacular days of the '70's and '80's. Commonly termed "Cape Horners," they bore a splendid reputation for seamanship, good food and quarters, and, in contrast to the dainty clipper, they made money! They were long a familiar sight in Portland Harbor, and were just as much at home too in Calcutta, Hong Kong, or Australia. They wrote largely in sailing history the glory of Maine-built ships and Maine seamanship.

But out on the horizon, threatening and ominous, like a sailor's warning, was the slow and relentless gathering of a storm that was to strike the old square-rigger a staggering blow, which she was never to survive. She could brave in comparative safety the perils of hurricanes and Cape Horn "snorters," but she couldn't outlive the gradual but inevitable change from sail to steam. With the coming of iron hulls and steam-propelled vessels, the era of the once proud ship with her splendor aloft was ended. And with it, it might be said, went the golden age of American shipping, and, to a great degree, American shipbuilding. Less and less the sun-kissed shores of Casco Bay echoed with the melody of caulking mallets,



of the busy hum of shipbuilding, and of the more imperceptible, pungent aroma of resin, tar, and pitch pine. As late as 1871, there were no less than twenty active and thriving shipyards between Cape Elizabeth and Small Point. Time was, too, when graceful ships in the process of creation were to be seen even on the waters of the Presumpscot, Stroudwater, and Fore Rivers. Startling as it may seem to the younger generation, the very site of their playgrounds in Deering's Oaks witnessed more than one successful launching. Many Portlanders of today will, I am sure, recall with a tinge of nostalgia the famous Russell Yards at East Deering, which saw their last vessel safely off the ways as recently as 1891.

During the War of 1812 Portland shipyards produced many privateers, most of them manned by Portland seamen, and they played an all-important part in the winning of the war. The two most noteworthy, perhaps, were the *Dart*, built at Cape Elizabeth, and the *Hyder Alley*, named in honor of a rajah in India, and built by Sam Fickett in his yard at the foot of Park Street. She was a ship of 360 tons, yet in those days was considered quite enormous. It is interesting to note that she was armed with the actual guns, captured from the ill-fated English brig, the *Boxer*. The *Dart* was of the notorious "Dart Rum" fame, which it was claimed by a local wag "raised the spirits of the people of Portland during a most trying time."

A frequent and familiar visitor to the Harbor up to about fifteen years ago was the old coasting schooner, the *Polly*. But few people, I think, were ever aware of her former fame and glory, and of her honorable career as a privateer. She served in the War of 1812, and actually captured nine prizes. Built in 1805 in Amesbury, Massachusetts as a sloop, she was changed to a war-vessel, and ultimately converted into a schooner for the coasting trade. She sailed the seas for more than a hundred

years, becoming at last the oldest vessel listed in the American registry. The story is told that a patriotic society once contemplated purchasing her and preserving her as a lasting memorial, but the movement fell through, and as is too often the fate of all proud sailing ships, she was stripped of her splendor, and her bones allowed to rot on some abandoned beach.

We have treasured and consecrated our *Constitution*, and there is a movement on foot, I believe, to preserve Admiral Farragut's old ship, the *Kearsarge*, but if one wants to view a full-rigged clipper ship today in all its beauty and majesty he has to journey three thousand miles to Falmouth Harbor in England. There may now be seen, preserved for all time, the famous English clipper *Cutty Sark*, fully rigged, riding at anchor in the harbor, as an inspiring and lasting reminder to a generation of coal and oil seamen of what a real ship looked like. She is the last survivor of her race.

Maine has always been regarded as the home of shipbuilding, so it is not surprising to learn that the first ship ever built in this country was launched at Popham in 1607. But it is not generally known perhaps, that Portland, too, built a ship as early as 1636. The learned historians tell us that in that year a bark was launched at Richmond's Island, and was sailed to England with a load of pipe staves from Casco Bay! Nothing much in the way of civic news ever escaped the watchful eyes of old Parson Smith, and in his diary he notes that in 1727 a Mr. Redding launched a sloop right in front of his house, which was at the foot of India Street. It was not uncommon for him to see twenty or thirty vessels lying at anchor in the harbor. Thirty years later the little community which inhabited the "Neck," as old Portland was called, actually owned 1376 tons of shipping. Unfortunately, the Revolution worked sad havoc with the business, for by 1787 there was not a single ship owned in the town.



The commercial growth of the city too, paradoxical as it may seem, worked an equal hardship on the old shipyards, as with the building of Commercial Street in 1851, many of the picturesque and historic yards were wiped out when the waters fronting Fore Street were filled in, and the old wharves built over. Perhaps the most famous of all shipyards which survived until 1851 was the ship basin at Clay Cove which was situated between India and Pearl Street. Here the doughty naval hero Commodore Preble superintended the construction of the country's first gunboats, and near the site of the Grand Trunk terminal were built those two fine Boston Steamers, the *General Warren*, and the *Commodore Preble*, named in honor of the distinguished commander. These boats definitely established the success of the Portland Steam Packet Company which many years afterward became amalgamated into the Eastern Steamship Company.

One of the first if not the very first successful marine railways in the country was built and operated here. One can readily gather how flourishing those early days were when we read that the year 1816 witnessed a launching every ten days in the Portland shipyards. The environs of the town were no less active, as fourteen vessels were said to have been at one time on the yards at Stroudwater. Quite a few of the early shipbuilders used to build, figuratively speaking, in their own back yards. Nathan Dyer ran a prosperous shipyard at the foot of State Street and is reputed to have built the first steamer by the name of *Portland*. This ship is not to be confused, of course, with the later steamship by the same name, which met such a tragic fate in that terrible storm of 1898, in which she foundered with all on board. Many members of the city's most prominent families lost their lives in that disaster.

In the declining days of shipbuilding a vessel of two thousand tons was considered quite ordinary, so we are somewhat

surprised to learn that when Robert Knight whose yard was at York and Maple Streets built the *Astrachan* of only 536 tons, she was regarded as enormous. Ferry Village has always figured prominently in shipbuilding activities, and still does though much restricted. Her output today, it might be said, is designed for pleasure, rather than profit, and of a prosaic rather than a romantic quality. It is interesting to note, too, that Ferry Village or its immediate neighborhood, produced a part clipper type ship long before the noted Donald McKay reached his fame, in the *Phoenix* built in 1854 by Nathaniel Blanchard. At the present-day Knightville was the establishment of J. Knight who was, incidentally, the founder of the settlement by that name.

According to the Registry, the year 1850 saw 92,000 tons of shipping constructed in this city, which happened to be more than three times the total production of her rival city, Boston; and in 1870, figures at the Custom House show that more than 100,000 tons hailed from this port, which included the sailing fleet operated by J. S. Winslow, Chase Leavitt, Ryan & Kelsey, and George S. Hunt.

In its long checkered career old Portland harbor has witnessed many stirring historic scenes and not a few that might be considered quite extraordinary. Such for example as the tragic procession of the battle-scarred *Boxer* and *Enterprise* bearing the bodies of their youthful English and American commanders, both from the sea battle off Pemaquid; also the imposing assemblage of English battleships that anchored below Munjoy Hill to escort the young Prince of Wales home from his visit in 1860. And what could be more startling and perfectly wonderful than the statement made in all seriousness by John Jocelyn in 1638, that he had just seen a gigantic sea serpent "sunning himself on the rocks on an island." A perhaps not unkindly critic has suggested that John was a little too



fond of a certain mixture of rum and hard cider, and that the wonder is that he had not seen a whole flock of them. Then there was that lively whale cavorting and snorting all over the harbor back in 1866. He got all tangled up with the underpinnings of Vaughan's bridge but managed to escape despite all the efforts of the fishermen and longshoremen to harpoon him.

But even the toughest old mariners of 1824 were seen to scratch their heads in perplexity and to mutter in their beards, "T'aint so, t'aint so," when they beheld before their very eyes the extraordinary spectacle of a complete frame dwelling-house floating across the harbor. A resident of Cape Elizabeth decided to emigrate to Portland and hated to forsake his home so he lashed airtight casks to the base, successfully launched it, and sailed it safely to the town landing.

Portland, so it is claimed, is entitled to the signal honor of being the birthplace of steam-propelled passenger craft when the *Alpha*, described as a flat-bottomed craft of fifteen tons, made her maiden trip in the harbor in 1816. However the first official announcement of steamboat sailings appeared in the local papers six years later. It read that the *Kennebec* would leave Union Wharf regularly for Yarmouth. It couldn't have been very highly regarded by deep water sailors as it was satirically nicknamed the "Groundhog" due to the fact that it was too frequently in trouble. Since it lacked both sails and oars the passengers were often forced to tread the blades of the paddlewheels when the faulty engines balked against the tide. Not at all discouraged nor dismayed, the owners came back with the following blast:

"A fig for all your clumsy craft,  
Your pleasure boats and packets,  
The steamboat lands you safe and sound,  
At Mansfield's, Trott's, or Hackett's."

The few families that inhabited Munjoy Hill in the year 1823, were greatly disturbed and excited one morning when their attention was called to a long line of thick smoke extending over the Cape shore. Some suggested that it was a forest fire on the Cape, but as it appeared to show a mysterious movement and was apparently approaching nearer and nearer, the superstitious became thoroughly alarmed and declared that surely the Day of Judgment was at hand! Not until a crude little steamboat turned the Cape point, smoking furiously, were their fears entirely dispelled. It was the *Patent* on her first trip here from New York captained by Seward Porter. These early boats of course used wood for fuel, and it was not until 1835, that coal was substituted, as it happened, on the original steamer *Portland*. This was considered a great novelty as the first coal the local citizens ever saw was a hogshead full which Captain Waite brought lashed to the deck of his sloop in 1826. With it he brought an open grate and immense crowds came to the wharf to see the Captain "burn the rocks," as they called it.

A steamboat service to Boston was inaugurated in 1833 with the sailing of the palatial sidewheeler *Chancellor Livingston* constructed under the supervision of Robert Fulton, the "daddy of steamboats." The *Commodore McDonough* was run in opposition by Cumberland Steam Navigation Co., but the success of both was short lived as they failed for lack of patronage. With the organization of the Portland Steam Packet Co. in 1844 operations became successful and the two steamboats *Commodore Preble* and *General Warren* began fairly regular schedules. 1860 saw the first regular service to New York, and at the same time a boat service was commenced between Portland and Bangor with the *Daniel Webster*.

Other steamship operators sprang up like mushrooms overnight and the shrewd Commodore Vanderbilt, scenting an



easy dollar from his office in New York, entered into the field by buying an interest in a line between Bath, Gardiner, and Boston. Then the battle commenced and the fiercest kind of competition arose. A competing line cut the fare to Boston to the absurd amount of twelve and one-half cents, another threw in breakfast free, until the wily old Commodore found the pace too hot for even him and withdrew from the scene greatly discomfited, when he found the Down East Yankees could beat him at his own game.

However, in spite of all these various steamboat activities along the Atlantic coast it was not until 1855 that steam began to seriously compete with sail. Even when Samuel Cunard, who was subsidized by the British government to the tune of \$800,000, began to create the famous Cunard line of ocean steamships, it was not thoroughly believed that the new-fangled steamboat would ultimately be successful and eventually sound the death knell of the sailing ship. Portland got her first impetus from ocean travel with the arrival in 1853 of the *Sarah Sands* under the command of a local mariner, Captain Washington Illsley. Her coming was awaited with such importance that her arrival was announced with the ringing of bells and the firing of cannon. An elaborate banquet in celebration of the affair was held at old Lancaster Hall, and the menu listed no less than ninety-two succulent delicacies, to say nothing of the profusion of beverages.

A few years later reports reached the city of the building in England of that stupendous failure of the maritime world, the *Great Eastern*, which would be so large when completed that not a single dock on the Atlantic coast would be adequate to accommodate her. The local Board of Trade and a group of patriotic citizens put their heads together with the result that almost overnight \$60,000 was subscribed for the purpose of constructing two huge piers at the foot of Munjoy Hill to at-

tract the steamship to this port. There was nothing very conservative in those enterprising days when it came to a business deal. The Victoria piers were duly completed and all was excitement awaiting the arrival of the leviathan. Thousands of tickets of admission to the piers were issued and hundreds of cots assembled to take care of the overflow of the crowds expected on that great day.

But the *Great Eastern* never came. She was ill-fated from the beginning and was so huge and awkward that she had to be launched sidewise after many unsuccessful attempts. On her trial trip an explosion occurred and six men were killed, and in the end she proved a financial failure. When she was finally broken up in 1887, the skeleton of a missing riveter was found trapped in the inner plates of the hull. To most men of the sea this gruesome and uncanny incident was explanation enough of her ill fortune. The blackened remains of these Victoria wharves can still be seen at low tide.

These wharves served a good purpose however in 1860 when the then Prince of Wales passed through the city homeward after a tour of this country. He embarked nearby on his royal barge amid the firing of many salutes from Fort Preble and the English battleships anchored in the harbor which had come to escort His Royal Highness to England. Barely nineteen years of age and quite good looking, he attracted, so they say, the largest crowd ever to assemble in this city and caused quite a heart fluttering to the ladies. It was noticed that he wore an unusually tall hat, a fashion in "toppers" which was quite new to this country.

Quite a catastrophe and a decided "faux pas" occurred in connection with this royal "topper" that obviously aroused royal displeasure. Just as the young prince was about to step into the barge an ardent lady admirer, with all the good intentions in the world, threw a bouquet of flowers at the royal



guest. For once in history, a lady's aim was straight and true, and the royal "topper" toppled into the water. Great embarrassment ensued, as well can be imagined, and holding the dripping hat in his hands the prince sharply ordered his departure without any further ado.

By 1890, the commerce of the port amounted to the tidy sum of a million dollars and during the world war it grew to four millions. For one brief moment it seemed as though the port would once again resume her former exalted position in the world of shipping, but those were abnormal times and prosperity was shortlived. When the *Edna C. Hoyt*, the last of the five-masters, sailed for the Barbados with a cargo of shooks in 1935, as in days of old, the event was so unusual that national attention was attracted. News photographers from the leading newspapers of the country followed her to sea to obtain pictures of the rare sight of a five-masted sailing ship under full sail. She was the last of her tribe, and now she too has met the all-too-common fate of old time sailing ship, ending her few remaining years stripped of her raiment as a nondescript coal barge in foreign waters.

It seems hardly credible to us today, but less than twenty years ago there were many five and even six-masters to be seen in the harbor engaged in the trade of carrying shooks to the West Indies. Today there is not a single five or six-masted vessel in active service. To those however who are still inspired by old ways of the sea there yet remains a pretty sight, the last few remnants of the old Down East coasters as they gracefully glide to the wharf side disdainfully ignoring the help of the gasoline "kicker." The oldest active representative of this one-time fleet of packet coasters is the picturesque, weatherworn little *William Keene*, captained by Bert Webber, a frequent visitor to the harbor. She bids fair to equal the proud record of the old *Polly* with nearly eighty years of sea







